MEGATAPE 13: ARCADE AND ADVENTURE! BLIMEY!

BEST SELLIN' SPECTRUM MAG!

SINCLAIR user

MARCH 1989 No 84 HFL8.90

£1.60



HUMAN KILLING MACHINE

MEGATAPE 13
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ON TAPE 13:

SIDE A: THE FABULOUS PHANTOM CLUB
500 ROOMS OF ACTION! GREAT 3-D GRAPHICS!

SIDE B: ESCAPE
MINDBOGGLING ADVENTURE!



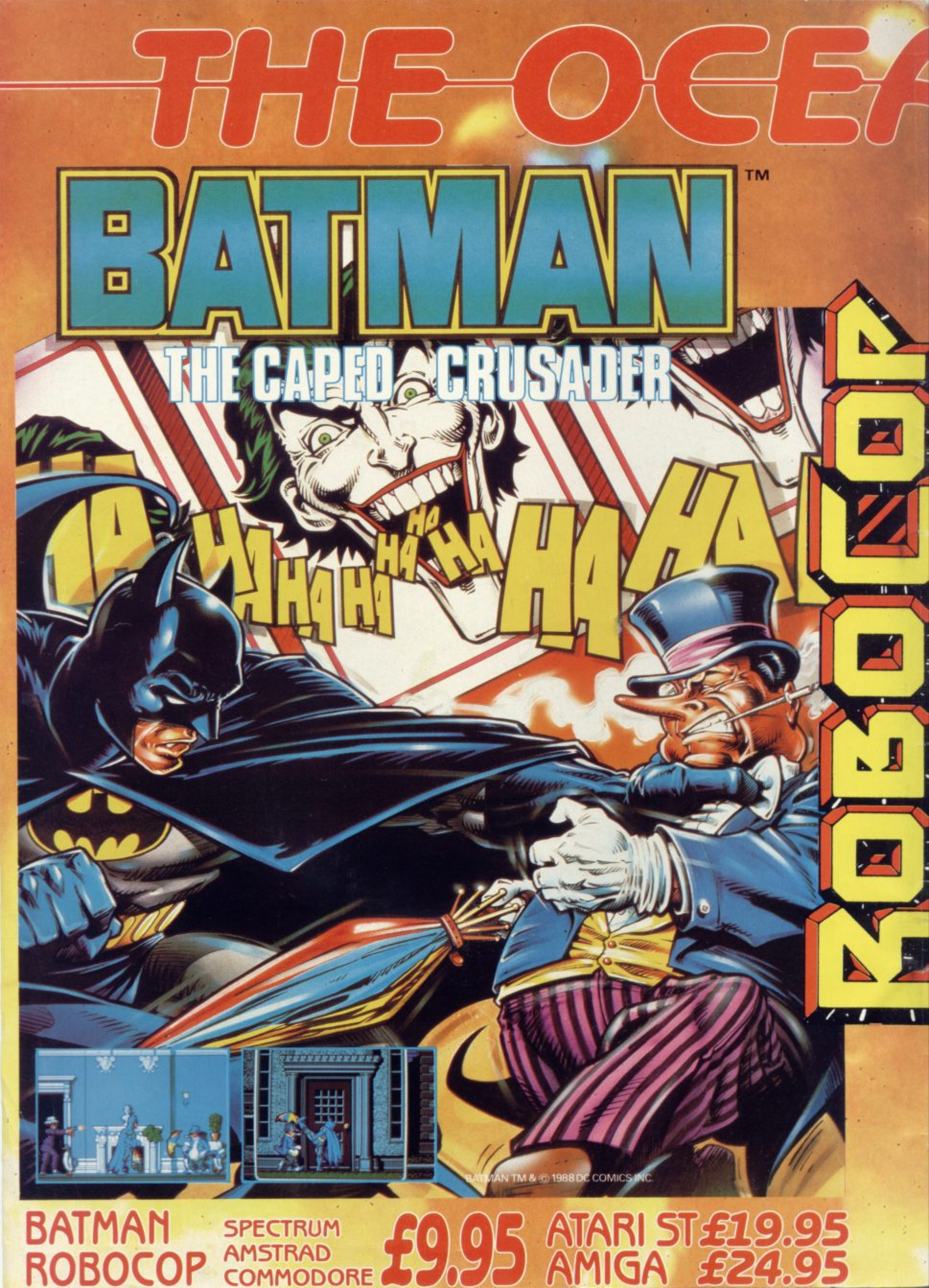


THIS MONTH:

VICTORY ROAD • H.A.T.E.
OBLITERATOR • ANCIENT BATTLES
SPITTING IMAGE AND LOADS MORE!
PLUS: SATELLITE TV — THE HORRIBLE TRUTH!

WIN: A BIKE! A DRAGON! A SPACESHIP!

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CONT

SATELLITE TV 48

At last the truth is revealed! How exactly do you install a Satellite TV aerial? What exactly will the sort of programs you can see on it be like? Is this really the truth? Well, no not really. The reality may be a lot worse . . .

SOFTWARE

PREVIEWS 84

Loads and loads this month including the amazing Chicago 30's, Gemini Wing, Gary Lineker's Hot Shot, **and zillions of others including this month's special guest – the mystery hamster game. (Ooooooooweeeeeee oooooo). Who says that nobody is releasing any new stuff for the Speccy. (Who says Speccy and lives . . . – GT)**









EXTRA EXTRA 38 EXTRA EXTRA

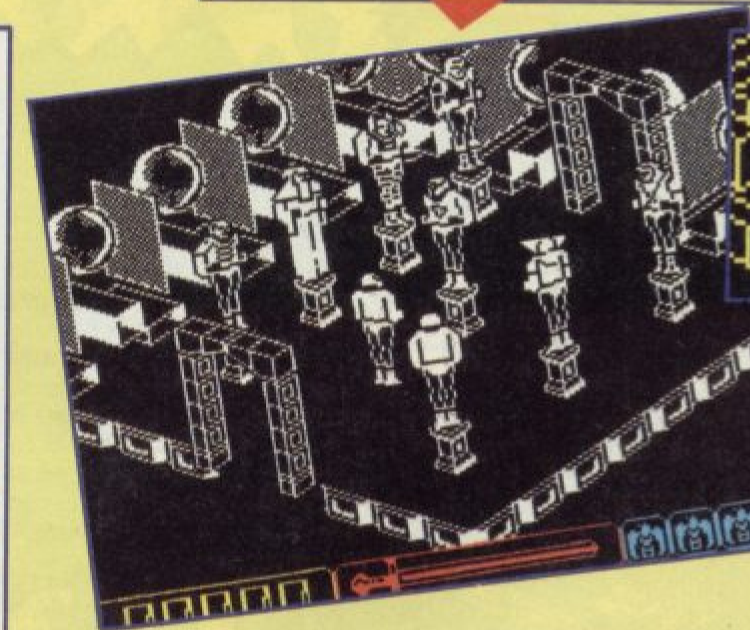
Terrible news right after writing this month's replies to readers' letters Kamikaze Bear suffered a nervous breakdown. He may never return! Turn to True Stories immediately for the latest horrifying news! (38) Find out how you can help get him back or have him put away for ever!

ENTS

MEGATAPE 13 6

We were a bit worried about this unlucky 13 business but we thought that you might notice if we called it 13b or just went straight on to 14. So we braved it out and are we glad we did. Megatape 13 has got something for everyone. With Phantom Club we've got one of the best 3D games ever released, there's 500 different rooms to explore and loads of puzzling and zapping to be done! Check it out now! Wonder how we can be so generous! But that's not all!

We've also got oooweeeeeoooooooo Escape, an astoundingly bizarre adventure c/o Tartan Software. It's so difficult we expect to get lots of phone calls from people stuck claiming that it can't be done. It can and it also means we can say Yah Boo Sucks to all those people who write in and say "How come it's always arcade games on the Megatapes?" Phah! How come you didn't have more faith we'll say.





COMPETITIONS (LOTS)



WIN A DRAGON! 10

It's like this our man Tim Noonan has got a thing about Dragons (and who can blame him some of them are very attractive) and so we had a word with those marvellous Games Workshop people and they supplied Tim with a fantastic Dragon model and he using his formidable artistic skills has lovingly painted it. You can win it and loads of runners up prizes in this charmingly personalised competition.

WIN A BIKE! 20

What a prize! You get to choose the sort of bike you'd like in this fantastic Fire and Forget competition. Has anyone ever been this generous in the history of the entire world ever? (Well there was Wayne Smedley's offer of a Porsche each if we'd only be nice to him – GT).

WIN A SPACESHIP! 55

You loved the playable demo, you loved the review, you loved the Blueprint. Now in celebration of the sheer wonderfulness of Xenon we're giving you a chance to love the competition to win a host of space toys.



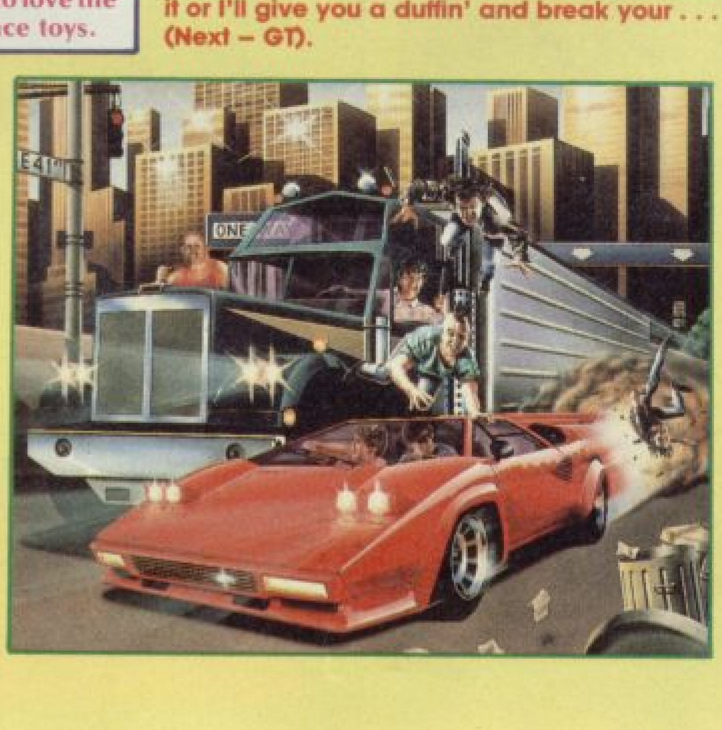
COVER GAME 34

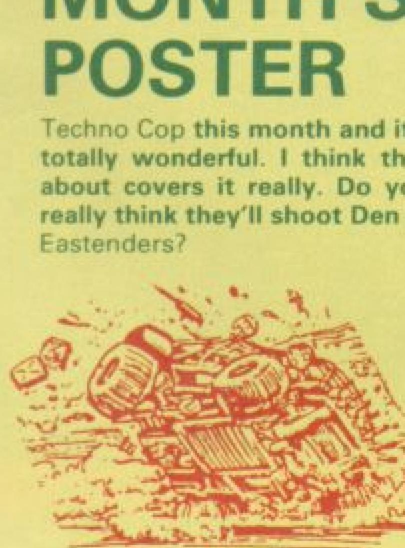
This month's cover game is US Gold's brilliant Streetfighter follow up, Human Killing Machine. We've got the exclusive review of the game, with loads of pictures, some gorgeous playing tips (Sorry did you say gorgeous? – GT). Yes absolutely fluffy marvelously dainty playing tips (Excuse me readers I'll just have this journalist removed to the Stephen Fry home for writers who use effeminate adjectives. Next). Rite its a grate game and we like it lots and so does our mates and yoo shoud turn to page 34 right now and read all about it or I'll give you a duffin' and break your . . . (Next – GT).



THIS MONTH'S POSTER 50

Techno Cop this month and it's totally wonderful. I think that about covers it really. Do you really think they'll shoot Den in Eastenders?





THE USUAL STUFF

MEGATAPE 13 ★ MEGATAPE 13 ★ ME

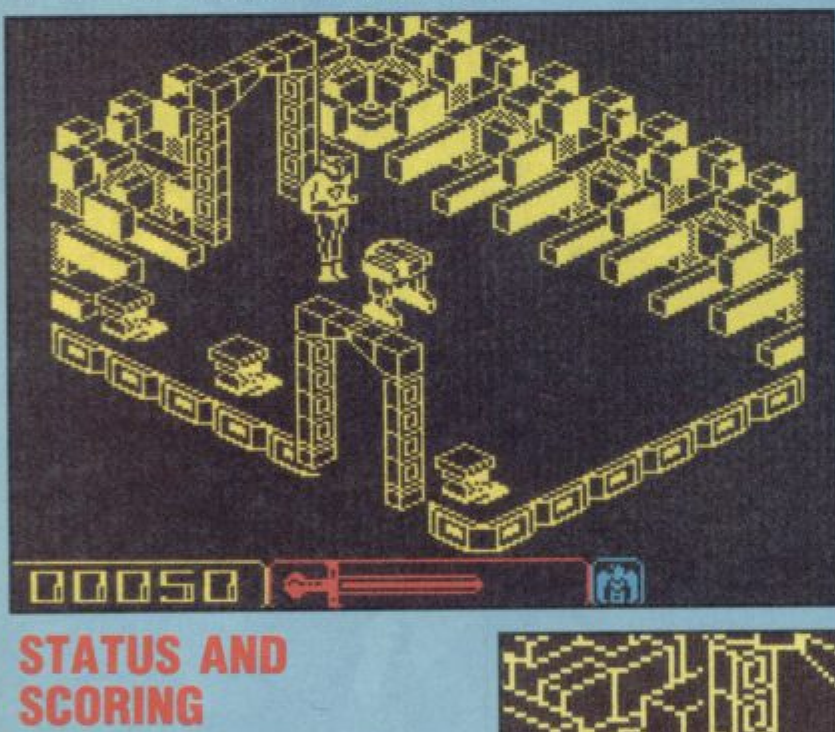


Wow! This month's Megatape has got everything! We've got a fabulous arcade game, and a complete adventure! Now we know Adventures are not everyone's bag but we've had a lot of letters from ardent pixie bashers saying "what about an Adventure for a change" and so we've given in. (Our rivals will probably think of it next month)

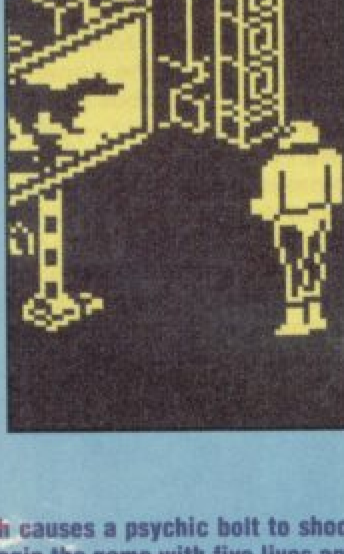
PHANTOM CLUB

The Phantom Club is a collection of super heroes with strange and deadly powers. Once good guys, they've been turned to evil ways by the dark deadly and dodgy Zarg. You are Plutus, lone superhero destined to restore the superheroes to their former goodness.

This is going to involve exploring all 500 rooms of club headquarters and performing a number of tasks. All missions are hazardous – you probably won't make it.



STATUS AND SCORING



Your score is displayed in the bottom left of the screen, in the middle is your energy and bottom right is the number of lives remaining. Enemies disabled score between 20 and 200 points depending on how dangerous and how many hits are needed to accomplish this.

Finding and shooting a rotating sphere on a pillar will give you a bonus score of 10,000 or 25,000 points.

Extra lives are obtained by finding the relevant object and touching it. See game play for more details.

GAME PLAY

You are imbued with the 'Brainstorm' which causes a psychic bolt to shoot from your head. This is your weapon. You begin the game with five lives and full energy. Each time you hit an object or shoot your energy bar will diminish. When the energy bar has run down completely then you will lose a life. In certain rooms you will find what appears to be a movie screen. When you activate this by shooting at it you will then be informed of a mission. However, each individual mission can only be given if you have attained the right rank and number of points. That is, there is one mission for each ranking and if you have not obtained the rank that a particular mission requires you will be informed that you are ineligible to pursue this particular task. When you find the correct mission for your rank you must have at least 40,000 points to be given the details of this mission.

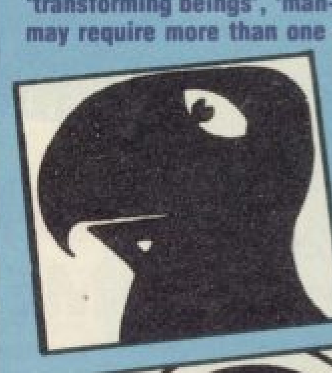
NOTE: Each time you complete a mission your rank is increased by one rating, your score resets to 0 and you will be transported to one of four random rooms within the complex. The ratings are as follows:

1. ZELATOR (Beginner)
2. TEORICUS
3. PRACTICUS
4. PHILOPHOSUS
5. ADEPTUS MINOR
6. ADEPTUS MAJOR
7. ADEPTUS EXEMPTUS
8. MAGISTER TEMPLI
9. MAGUS
10. IPSISIMUS (Overlord)



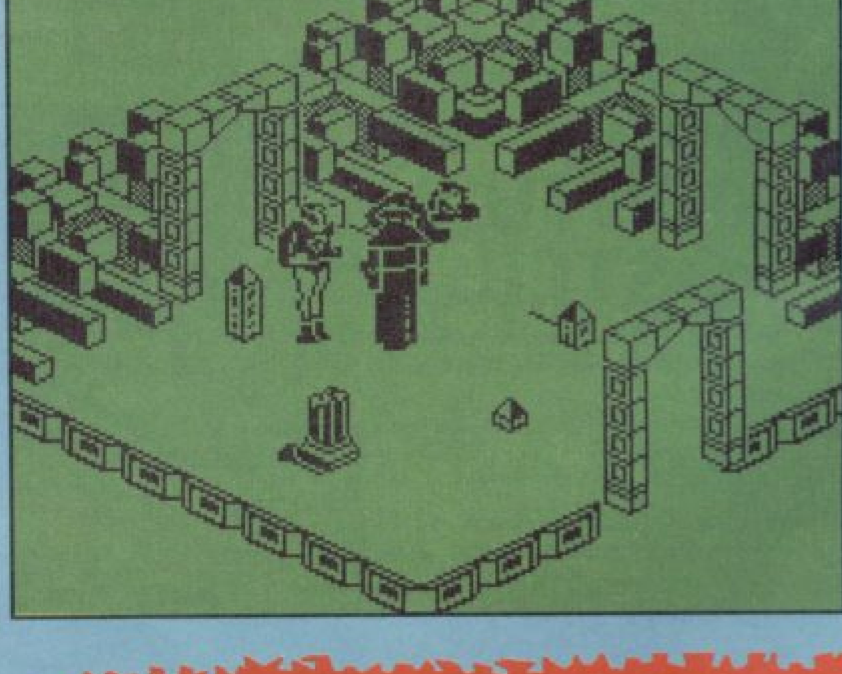
The dangers in each room are many and varied and take the forms as follows: Various inanimate and animate objects in the rooms must be avoided as the slightest contact will cause depeletion in your energy.

Super heroes will be encountered in different forms – monks, buddas, 'transforming beings', 'man-spiders' and many other deadly adversaries who may require more than one shot to be put out of commission. . .



When the hawk symbol appears in the top left corner of your screen this indicates that a character needs to be destroyed before you are able to exit. One of which is the 'Psi-Man' who is imbued with phenomenal telepathic powers. He causes a psychological barrier to be placed across the doorways of this room and can only be defeated by destroying his astral projection of his spirit (which takes the form of a bird) when he releases it. When the lightning bolt symbol appears in the top left corner of the screen then you will hear a bleeping sound. This is a countdown which signifies that all exits have been blocked. Only when this sound has stopped can you make your escape from this room.





MEGATAPE

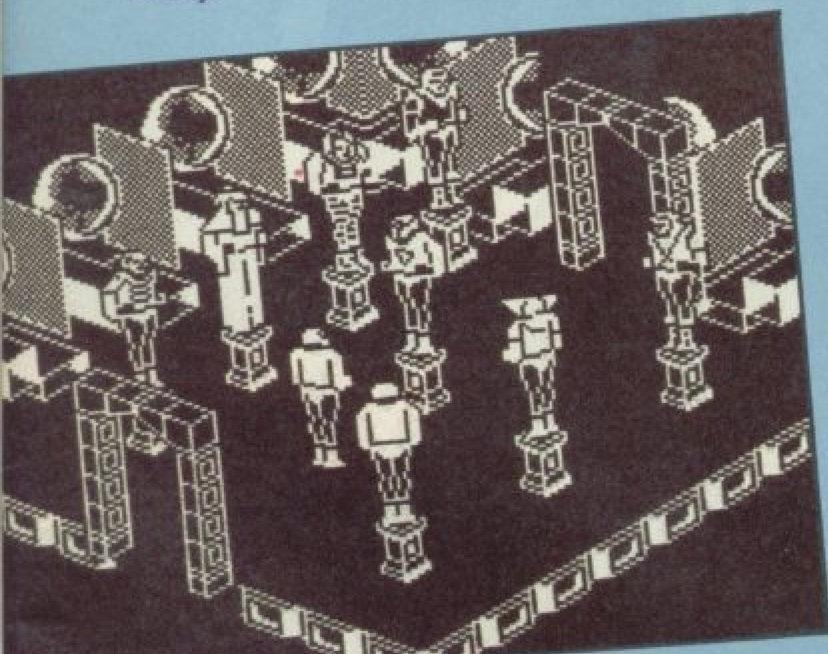
ESCAPE

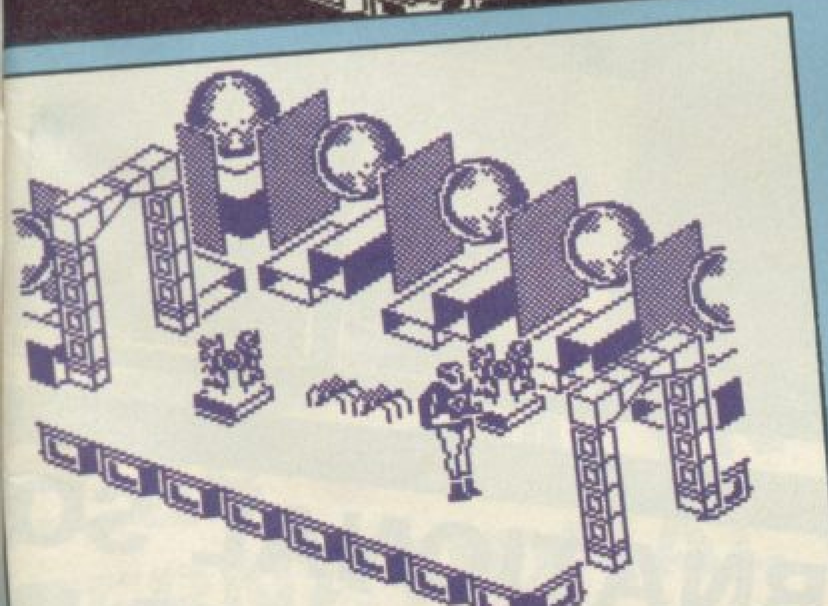
In response to hundreds of letters saying "why can't we have an adventure on the tape" we present *Escape* from Tartan software. This exceedingly bizarre offering is one of the most peculiar and infuriating adventures we've ever played. Existing Adventure fans will love/hate it and zappers may find it a bizarre break from the more arcadey challenges of *Phantom Club*. The completely baffled, will have to wait until another issue for a complete solution. The only advice we've got is don't give up. . . try and try and try. there is a solution! It's even true to say that all the answers are logical in a perverse sort of way. Thanks to Tom Frost of Tartan Software for all his help, and in supplying us with the game. . .

CONTROLS

Keyboard or joysticks can be used: Kempston, Sinclair and Cursor.
Bottom row of keys beginning at CAPS/SHIFT alternatively rotate your left or right ie rotate left is CAP/SHIFT XVN, rotate right is ZCMB.
The middle row of keys starting at A will cause you to jump.
The second row of keys starting at Q is go forward.
The top row of keys starting at number 1 is fire.
Joystick uses space bar for jump

NOTE: If you require directional control rather than rotation control then it is advisable to select the cursor option and use the cursor keys to move in the direction directly.

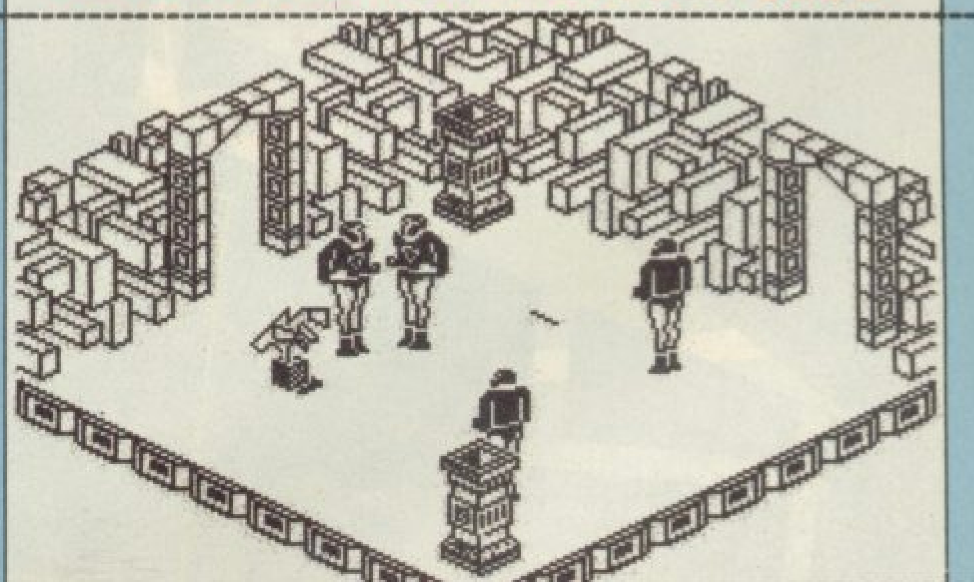




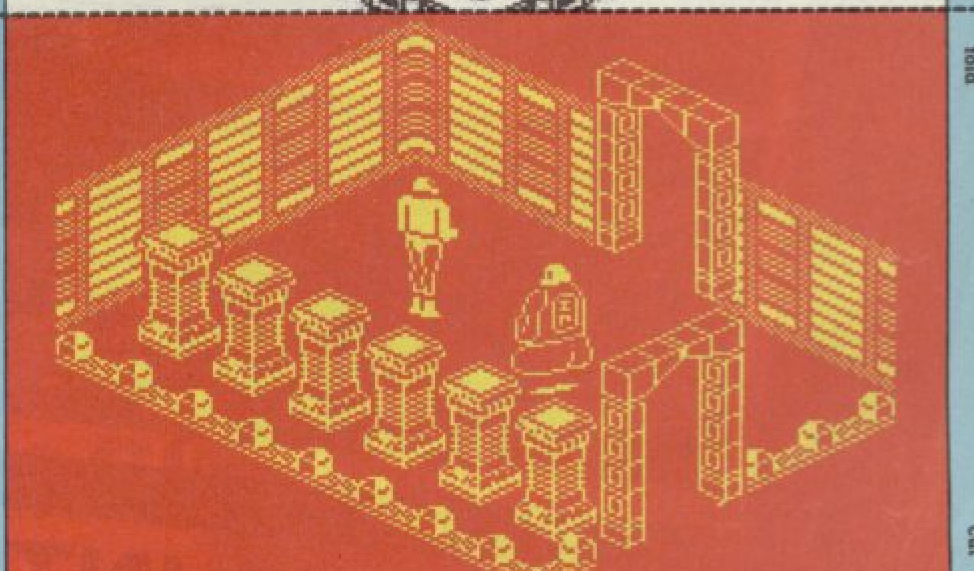
cut

fold

MEGATAPE 13 PHANTOM CLUB



fold



cut

EMLYN HUGHES INTERNATIONAL SOCCER

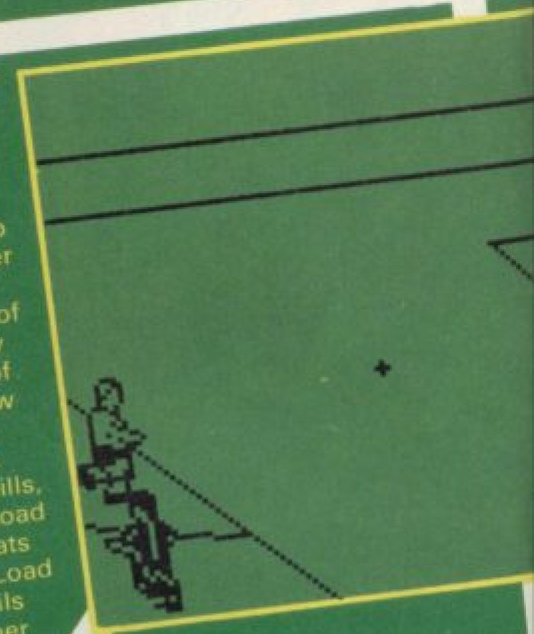
If there is anyone who can be accused of being overfriendly, it's our own lovely Emlyn. 'He's a weasel' chirped one member of staff. 'He's chubby and cuddly' said another. 'He's a squeaky, friendly mouse' threw in a member of Britain's yoof. Whatever you call him, the plain and simple fact is that not many people like Emlyn. Even Princess Anne hates him. Now, let's not jump to conclusions. Just because a game is endorsed by El Wimpo doesn't mean it's automatically going to be crap. Far from it. **Emlyn Hughes International Soccer** is better than any other Speccy footy game that has appeared to date, even **Matchday 2**, daddy of 'em all.

What sets **EHIS** apart from the rest are the HUGE amount of options and the advanced control system. First things first, the options. There is quite a large amount of messing about and tweaking you can do to the game before you actually play it.

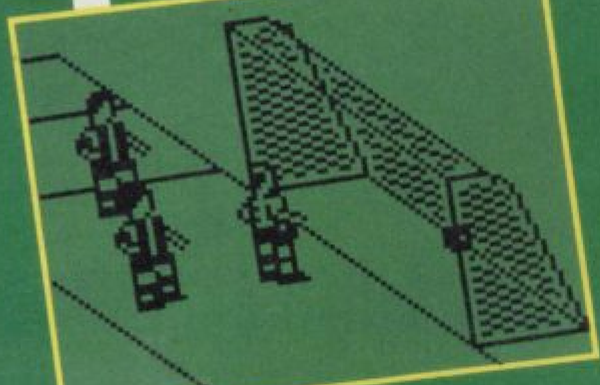
This is done via four pull down menus that between them carry more than 50 options that range from the normal things like Load and Save, as well as things like select a team to play and start up a cup, or season or a league. Ooooooh!

The game options let you change all the basic aspects of the game itself. You can choose whether to watch the computer playing against itself, should it get the chance and whether or not to play extra time. There are 10 skill levels to choose from, as well as the chance to play practice mode, which results in all the opposing players not doing anything at all. You can also determine the number of kick directions selectable from 1 (forward kicking only), 3 (forward and 45° either side) and 5 (forward, 20° and 70° either side). You can choose backheel on/off and whether to have the goalie under computer control.

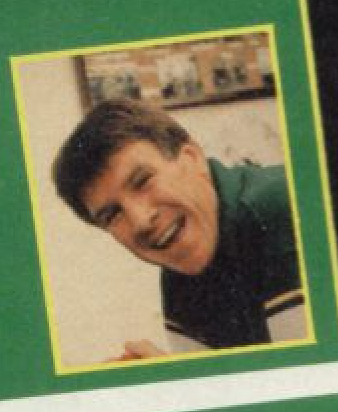
The teams are made of lots of individual players (Nah, really Tone? – AS), each with lots of different stats, governing how fast the character is on field, and his respective attacking, defensive and midfielding skills, all of which can be altered. Load and Save team just save stats and names of the players. Load and Save all saves all details including things like whether



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USER





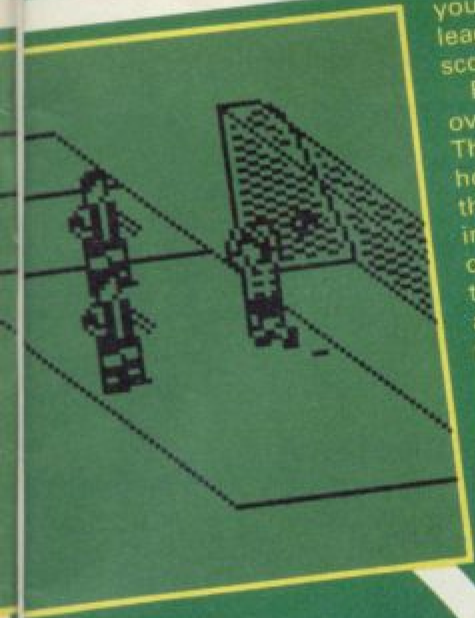


EMLYN HUGHES INTERNATIONAL SOCCER • EMLYN HUGHES I

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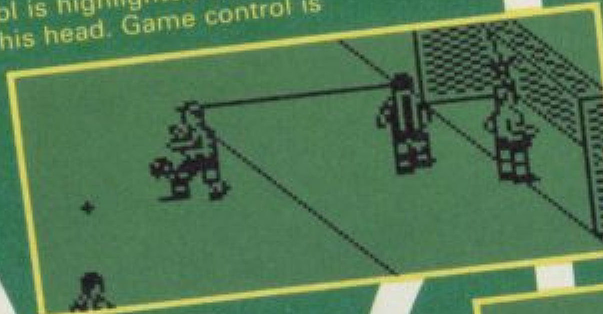
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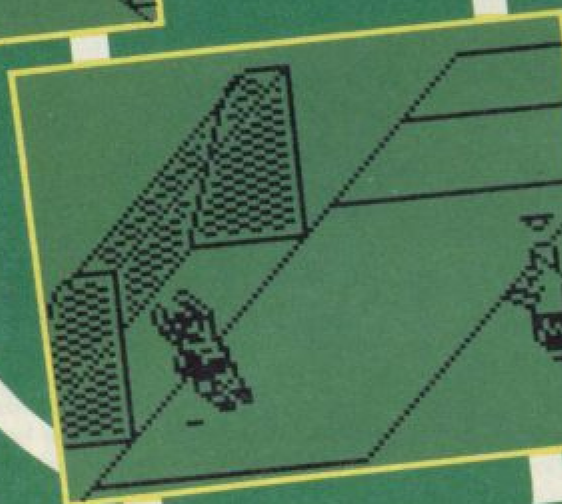
GAMES REVIEW!



you are in the middle of a cup, league or season, as well as all scores.

Right, that's the boring bit over with, here comes the fun. The most important and really hooking factor of the game it that the match is accurate and includes all rules apart from offside. All free kicks, penalties, throw ins and corners are there, and they need to be judging by the accuracy of the gameplay. Everything is pixel perfect. The man currently under your control is highlighted by a halo over his head. Game control is where the game really comes into its own. You can do almost anything in **EHIS** (apart from throw coins and punch supporters when you lose) and all from simple joystick motions. Push the joystick in a certain direction, and the man under your control will run in that direction. Continue to hold the joystick in that direction and the man will accelerate until he reaches top speed. Fire acts like a sort of clutch. Hold down fire and the man continues moving in the same direction if you have the ball. If you don't have the ball he will either do a sliding tackle, a lunge or a diving header, depending on the vertical positioning of the ball. If you have the ball, then what you do with the joystick determines the type of shot. If you push the joystick in the opposite direction to the way the player is facing, then the shot will be a lob. Push the joystick in the direction he's running, and it'll go along the floor. the length of time you hold down the button selects how hard the shot will be, from 28 different strengths. Pushing the joystick left or right from the direction the player is moving decides which direction the ball will go. Can't be bad.





Graphics are fab, brilliant and better. All of the characters are smallish, to be sure, but detail and animation is great. All the little men run around smoothly and some of the little animations are really cute. Like the three step goal kick, and the little triumphant wave after scoring a goal. Sliding tackles and diving headers are all catered for in their own sweet way.



EHIS is the best footy game I've ever played, well, on the Speccy anyway. forget the endorsement, it's pretty darn good, or as the great Liver puddy himself would say, 'It's great'■

FAX BOX

STRATEGY SIMULATION REVIEW

EMLYN HUGHES INTERNATIONAL SOCCER *Label:* **Audiogenic** *Author:* **In-house** *Price:* **£8.95** *Memory:* **48K/128K** *Joystick:* **Various**

Best Spectrum football game. Ever

Reviewer: Tony Dillon

GRAPHICS	SOUND
86	31
96	91
PLAYABILITY	LAST ABILITY

OVERALL 91

10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90

EMLYN HUG

CCER • EMLYN HUG

NTERNATIONAL SOCC

COMPETITION



WIN A DRAGON

Yep, courtesy of Games Workshop we've got loads and loads of warriors, mythical beasts and dragons to give away! The first prize is of a particularly mean looking dragon which has been hand painted by SU's very own Picasso – ace designer Tim Noonan (woop woop). Imagine that! Your very own dragon model personally painted by an SU legend (are you sure? – AS).

RUNNERS UP!

But that's not all! We've got loads and loads of fabulous runners up prizes also courtesy of Games Workshop. We've got:
2 Giant Imperial Dragons
2 Zombie Dragons
5 Fantasy Regiments
5 Skeleton Hoards
so you're bound to win something really horrible!

WHAT YOU HAVE TO DO

Just answer the following questions which are all suitably dragon orientated:

1 What was the name of the dragon in The Hobbit?
a) Smug
b) Smaug
c) Smeg

2 Which of the following saints was a well known dragon slayer?
a) St Pancras
b) St and Greavsie
c) St George

3 What colour is the Welsh dragon?
a) Red
b) Beige
c) A sort of greeny bluey colour that hasn't really got a name

THINK YOU KNOW THE ANSWERS?

Think you can answer all of the questions? Yes? God you must be a genius. Just fill in the coupon below and send it off immediately to Win a Dragon Compo, 14 Holkham Road, Orton, Peterborough PE2 0UF. Closing date for the competition is end of March.

The Coupon:

Name..

....

....

Answers:

1 Dragon's name was ....

2 Dragon Slayer is ....

3 Welsh Dragon's colour is ....

● Not open to employees of EMAP, Games Workshop, or Wayne Smedley.



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COIN-OP Hits
© TAITO CORP. 1987
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CRASH – "Rastan is slick and compelling".
YOUR SINCLAIR – "So another spanker from Imagine. You'll be a fool if you miss it!"
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SLAPFIGHT
COMPUTER & VIDEO GAMES – "Simple. Smooth. Very addictive. A winner."
ZZAP "A superb arcade conversion and a great shoot 'em up. This is one for the ZAPPERS collection."
© TAITO CORP. 1988
RENEGADE
COMMODORE USER – "As conversions go this still takes some beating – literally and metaphorically."
YOUR SINCLAIR – "The graphics are so slick you really feel you're part of an action movie rather than just playing a game."
© TAITO CORP. 1987
ARKANOID
ZZAP 64 – "I thoroughly recommend Arkanoid – for the simple reason that it's simply gorgeous playing with it."
COMPUTER GAMES WEEK – "The take home message is simple. You want a great arcade game?"
© TAITO CORP. 1987
FLYING SHARK
COMPUTING WITH THE AMSTRAD CPC – "This is an excellent game."
ACE – "Incredibly frustrating playable and addictive."
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ARKANOID REVENGE OF DOH
AMTIX – "Excellent – can't fault it. A future number one."
YOUR SINCLAIR – "Immensely impressive and chronically addictive. A Classic."
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BUBBLE BOBBLE
AMSTRAD ACTION – "It's a cracker. Definitely a game I should keep coming back to."
GAMES MACHINE – "Packed to the brim with entertainment."
© TAITO CORP.
LEGEND OF KAGE
CRASH – "One I won't put down until I get through to the next level."
AVAILABLE ON
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AMSTRAD
COMMODORE
Imagine
..the name of the game
CASSETTE
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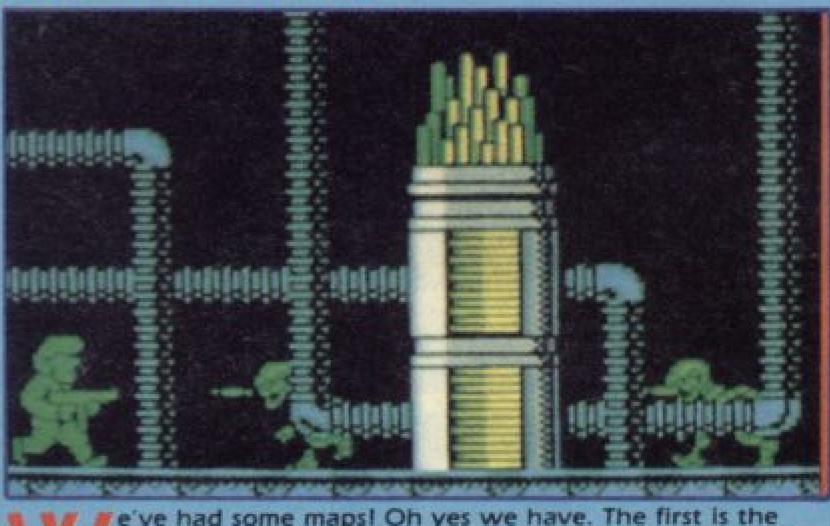
ZAP

Major issues of our time; how to get the wrappers off Opal Fruits after they have sat in the glove compartment for the past two years. Or perhaps you consider the boil on Tony 'Gary Davies' Dillon's left cheek to be a catastrophe of so monumental proportions that it has to be dealt with immediately. But no missus! Put those parsnips back in the washing machine (or wherever people put their parsnips nowadays) because all the major desires and burning ambitions in whole wide so-called 'world' can be categorized into two main groups. People who want to play the guitar. And people who want to do something else really. So, if you're (cue corny phrase handbook, line 122) one of those people who finds themselves sat firmly on a toadstool along with the other saucy young fellas from group one then before you get anywhere with the old 'axe' you'll need to grab some money. And where do ya get that from eh?

Well remember if you will dear viewers, a wee while ago when good old hunkin' Sinclair User offered a wopping 50 smackers to anyone out there who sent in the best visual art experience, i.e. a map. And nobody did. So nobody grabbed the cash. So get your act together and send all future offerings into 'I may be a swamp donkey but I still need the cash' followed by SU's normal 'cove', and before you know it you'll be Richie Smabora i.e. 'You were born to be my baby, and I was made to be your man (Na na na na na na na). (Grab hold of your breeks Riglar, you're in for a kickin'. – GT)

ZAPCHAT MAP SPECIAL THINGY

Section Writer: Jon 'A Good Mountain' Riglar



We've had some maps! Oh yes we have. The first is the complete map for *Deviants* which although it is well dead and buried by now, nobody else seems to have printed one and seeing we're a bunch of such incredible do-gooders we're gonna print it anyroad ignoring what anybody else screams. It's been sent in by Einar Vaagland from Norway. the second map is the first level of *R-Type* and by a complete fluke I've lost the name and address of the person who sent it. Oops!

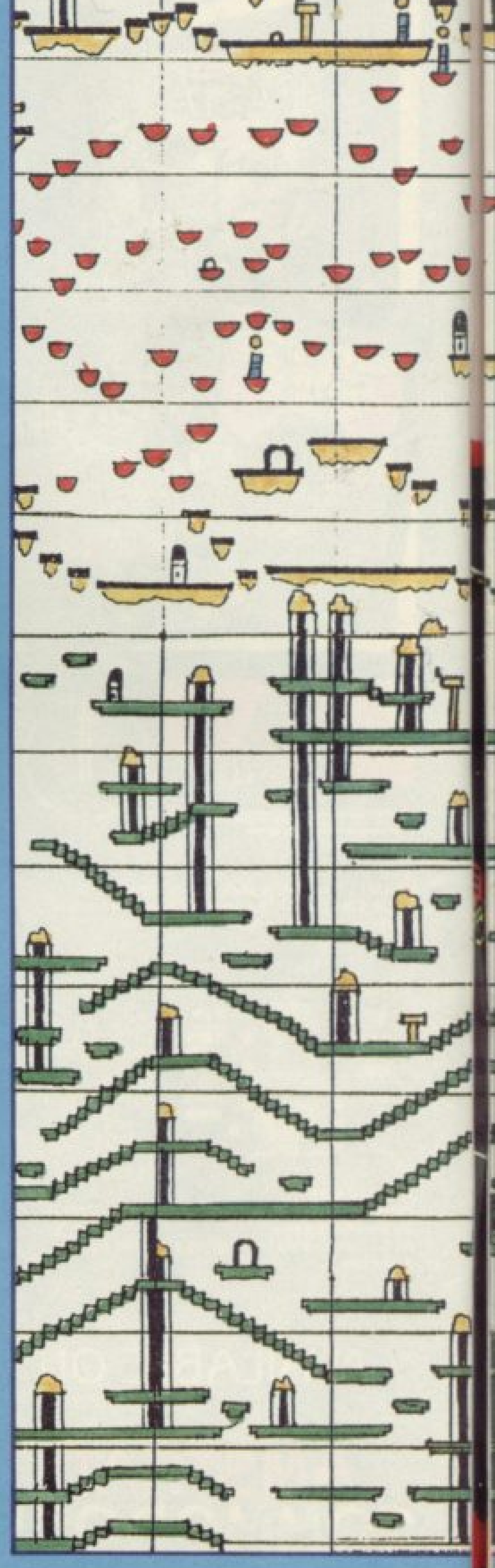
DEVIANTS GUIDE
AIM: Deactivate 30 bombs. There are 31 bombs, but the one at location G8 is impossible to reach.
DEACTIVATE: Touch the bomb.

1

Fiddle around with the keys 1-6 until only two valves are open. Use the Deactivator Code to close the rest.
TRANSPORT: Stand on top of a transporter and pull down on the joystick. Enter the name of the transporter you want to go to, see Transporter Code. Only the leftmost of the transporters with the same name is reachable with the transporter system.



VALVES OPEN	KEYS TO PRESS
1 + 2	1 + 4 + 6
1 + 3	1 + 2 + 4 + 5 + 6
1 + 4	1
1 + 5	1 + 2 + 4 + 6
1 + 6	1 + 4
2 + 3	2 + 5
2 + 4	4 + 6
2 + 5	2
2 + 6	6
3 + 4	2 + 4 + 5 + 6
3 + 5	5
3 + 6	2 + 5 + 6
4 + 5	2 + 4 + 6
4 + 6	4
5 + 6	2 + 6

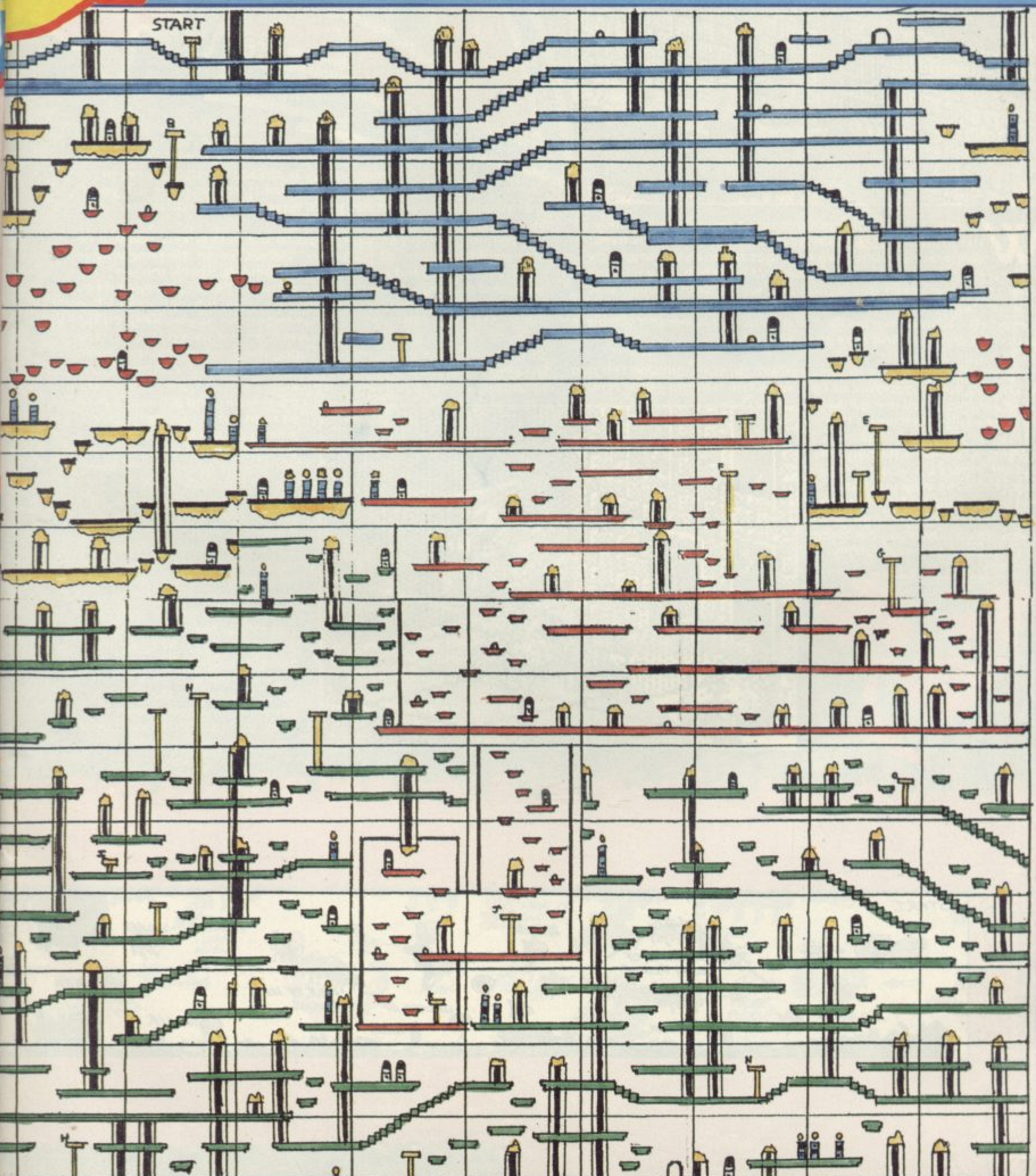


CHAT 2

TRANSPORTERS:

A=CERBURUS
B=GUZZLOID
C=AURIGIUS
D=ELECTRIX
E=EXCELSOR
F=XANTHIUS
G=CYBERNIA
H=ZACARONT
I=DENZIENT
J=DIZZIDUS
K=VESTRONA
L=DEVIANTS
M=JABBADOR
N=ASIMONUS
O=TROLLDOR

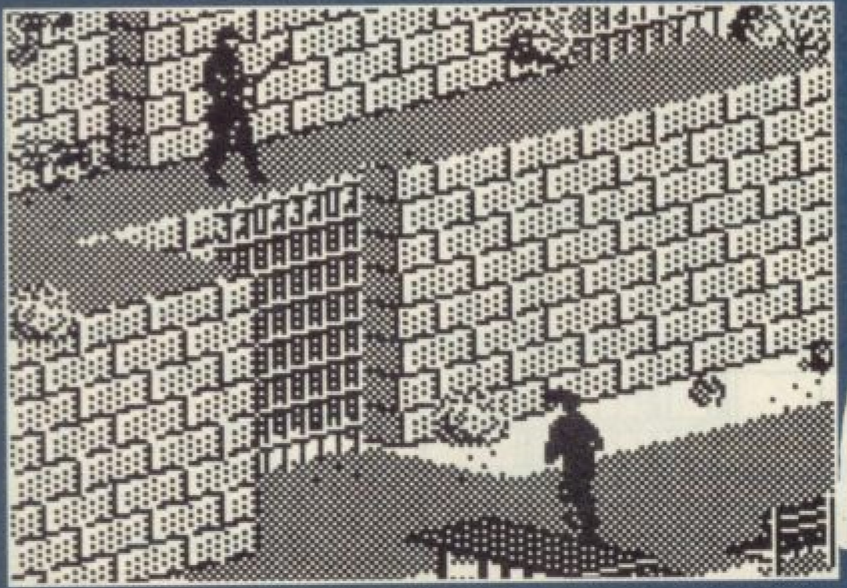
- TRANSPORTER
- BOMB
- ENERGY THING
- AMMO
- COLLAPSING FLOOR



ZAP

ZAPCHAT SAUCY DEVILISH QUICK TIP SPECIAL

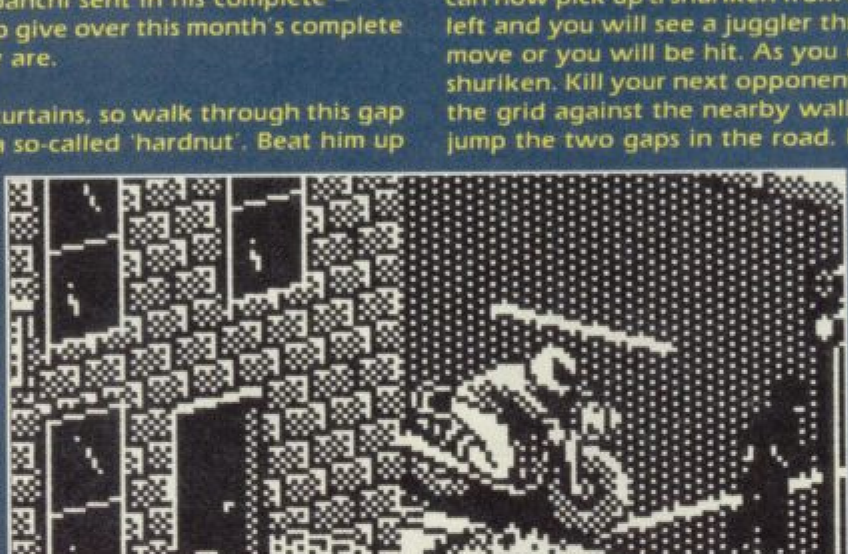
Man with stupid nickname: Jon 'Sticks' Riglar



We here at this wondrous institute known to everybody in the 'trade' as **SU**, have received sackfuls of pleas from desperate viewers who have got themselves completely and utterly lost in *Last Ninja 2*. A couple of months back we featured some *LN2* quick tips in this section, but we thought enough was enough and so when Josef Al-Qubanchi sent in his complete – complete!! – solution we decided to give over this month's complete section for the tips. And here they are.

LEVEL 1

You start off beside a gap in some curtains, so walk through this gap where you will be confronted by a so-called 'hardnut'. Beat him up using punches (they are quicker and less easily intercepted than kicks) and punch the button marked 'X' which is flashing on and off. Now turn around and zoom back the way you came and you should find a trapdoor has now appeared in front of the drums. Drop down to your knees so that when the next enemy runs in you can punch him unconscious. Pick up the key and leave via the door. (Unless your energy is already at critical level, in which case step back onto the starting square and your energy will be renewed but you'll have to start back at the beginning.) Ho hum.



If you survive long enough to get to the next screen, you will be confronted by a corrupt policeman. Defeat him in the same way as the previous two and exit via the bottom left. Knock the next opponent unconscious in the same manner as before (yawn) and you can now pick up a shuriken from the box at the side of the road. Run left and you will see a juggler throwing knives at you. Keep on the move or you will be hit. As you enter the next screen, activate the shuriken. Kill your next opponent using the shuriken and then climb the grid against the nearby wall. Leave the screen via the left and jump the two gaps in the road. Pick up the staff from amongst the other sticks and activate it straight away (you only have a limited supply of shuriken.) Jump the two gaps again and in the next screen, climb down the grid against the wall, facing the wall otherwise you'll fall off and that'll be it if you see what I mean.

If you hit the next opponent squarely with one of your remaining shuriken, he should not bother you. Pick up the map from the side of the road and follow the path along past the juggler. Keep on the move again when passing the juggler. Follow the path to the bottom right this time, and as you enter the new screen, wait. Walk slowly toward your new opponent, stopping in

3



CHAT 4

your tracks when he spots you. Just as he begins to draw his weapon, slash him with your staff, leave the screen and repeat the process i.e. enter, slash as he is drawing his weapon and leave, until the opponent is unconscious. Follow the path downwards and use the same system of slashing then retreating on your next assailant.



Next thing to do is to enter the female toilets (watch out for the women though) and nick the toilet chain (the first half of the nunchakus). Return to the crossroads and follow the path up-right. Beat up the next corrupt copper using a combination of high stabs and stomach stabs, more high stabs then stomach stabs (unless your energy is low in which case best you return to the start screen). Once the guy is killed, follow the path to the right and pick up a hotdog from the stand. For the next 'bad' guy use the old slash/retreat system, then get the second half of your nunchakus from the female toilets. Follow the path left until you are back at the gate. Beat up the cop (who should be unconscious as you enter the screen) as he wakes then open the gate with the key. Follow the path through the gate and jump across the river via the boat once it has started to move. Follow the path to the right, avoiding the bees, and jump right as you reach the edge.

You will land on an island where you should activate your staff and push the boat out with it. Return to the mainland and once again you should run to the right. Cross the river via the boat and you will have completed level 1!! (And about time too missus! – GT).

Go in the opposite directions to the arrows. (After activating your staff). Cross at first chance at the river (waiting until the lights stop flashing). Follow the route of the path, beating up any opponents using the usual slash/retreat method until you get to a door. Walk right up to it. Take one step back. Kick it down and beat up the owner using high stabs, then grab the flashing sword and leave. Walk along the path and cross back over the river. From this point on beat up all enemies using the staff.

Follow the path, grabbing a hotdog from the stand once again, until you come to the end. You'll find a bottle here, so snatch it then cross the road. Get the key from the open doorway and return to the first screen. Follow the arrows and you'll find yourself in 2nd alley. Beat up the opponent here and lift the manhole lid with the key. Drop down and into level 3.

If you are still totally lost then 'tune' in to next so-called 'month's' Zapchat for the last section of tips concerning *Last Ninja 2*. So that's yer lot for now!

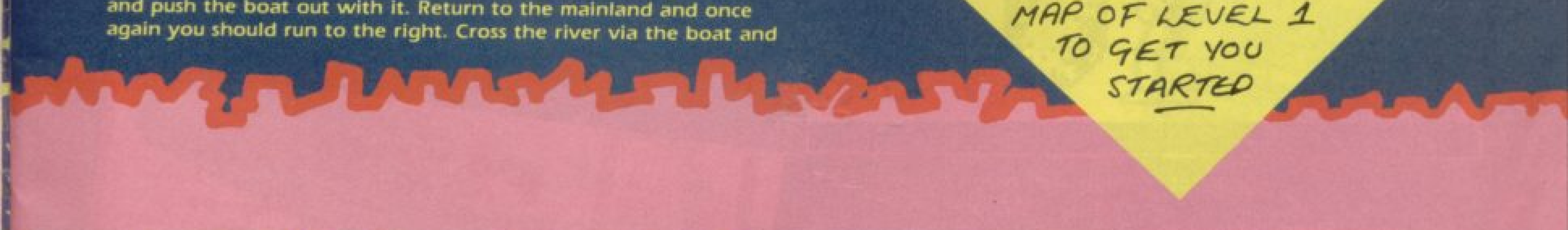
ZAPCHAT 'IT'S ROLF' HIGH SCORES

'Rolf' played by: Jon Riglar

Rolf would turn in his grave if her were dead! Where are those high scores? Everybody who sends in their scores will get their names mentioned no matter how piddly or brain damaging their score is. So get, as they say 'crackin' with the old pen and paper and jot down your claim to fame and send all offerings to 'Yes I ruddy well did Jon' followed by the usual what not. My god it's an offer you can't refuse! (I think you'll find you're mistaken there. – GT)

OUTRUN	99,454,120	Phil Honeywell
OUTRUN	99,964,830	Will Downing
BUBBLE BOBBLE	781,830	Heather Mitchell
PAPERBOY	110,450	Stuart Hogg
PAPERBOY	101,230	David King
ENDURO RACER	6,201,607	Gary Higgins
MARAUDER	50,450	Gary Higgins

R-TYPE STILL PROVING IMPOSSIBLE? HERE'S A MAP OF LEVEL 1 TO GET YOU STARTED



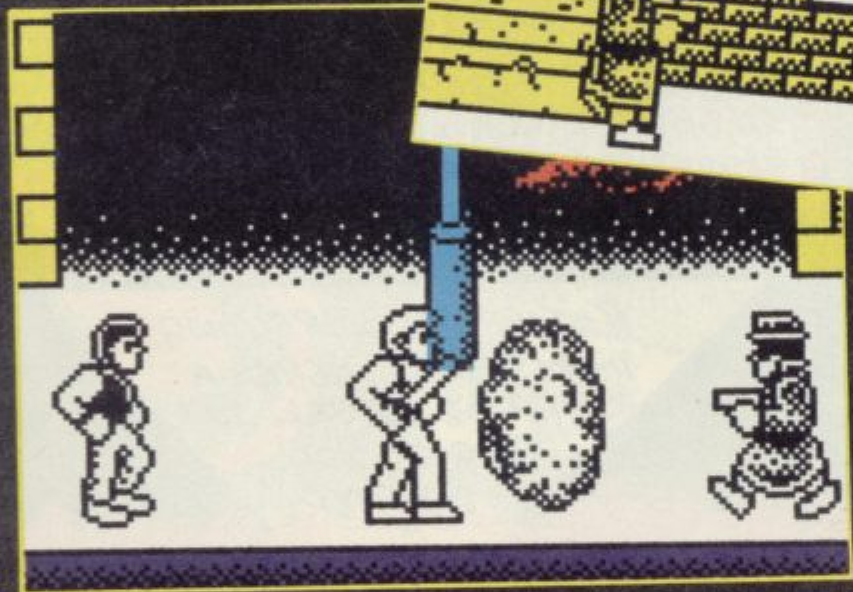
GAMES REVIEW!

STREET GANG



Yo, the guy in this game is almost as big and bad as me! He's no ordinary street-wise punk, no sir, he's the leader of a street gang. The most competitive sport on the American city streets ever to appear. You are Micky Spatsburg, ex cop and brain surgeon who has to cross the dangerous streets of New York in a desperate bid to reach the east side to save the life of a small child who desperately





needs surgery. (Their plot, not mine).

As a game, **Street Gang** is a flipscreen affair. You've got to get to the right hand side of the screen, beat up all the baddies and avoid the bullets, and it looks really nice. So it should, because the graphics are by none other than budget supremo, Colin **'Joe Blade 1 & 2, Deviants, Thing on a Spring, Brat Attack'** Swinbourne. Yeeey! Shame the gameplay doesn't match up to the graphics.

As you move from left to right, assailants run on from both sides of the screen. Regular hard guys just run across the screen, some of them stopping to wave a fist in your direction. Armed gunmen run about, stopping sometimes to take a shot in your direction. As in real life, bullets aren't a problem. All you have to do to avoid one is jump into the air.

At various points along the way, you find lots of spare weapons, just left lying around casually. Things like knives and baseball bats adorn the sidewalks. In the rough and tumble back streets of New York, even the litter is lethal. All the extra weapons seem to do is to extend your reach a little and make your graphic look more ferocious.

Now, the graphics. They're fab. All the sprites are large and well detailed and cartoony. The backgrounds are quite nicely laid out as well, and guess what, in colour mode there's tons of colour clash. Thankfully you can change between colour and mono backgrounds at the touch of a button.

The problem with the game? It's far too easy. It seems that if you keep jumping from left to right, you can't be hit by bullets and you avoid all the thugs. This is not good. I got to level three on my first go. This is also not good. The levels are only five screens long. This is the pits.

Another fine graphical effort from Mr Swinbourne, but a poor attempt at a game. Shame really■

FAX BOX

ARCADE REVIEW

STREET GANG *Label:* **Players** *Author:* **Kevin Parker, Colin Swinbourne** *Price:* **£1.99** *Memory:* **48K/128K** *Joystick:* **Various**

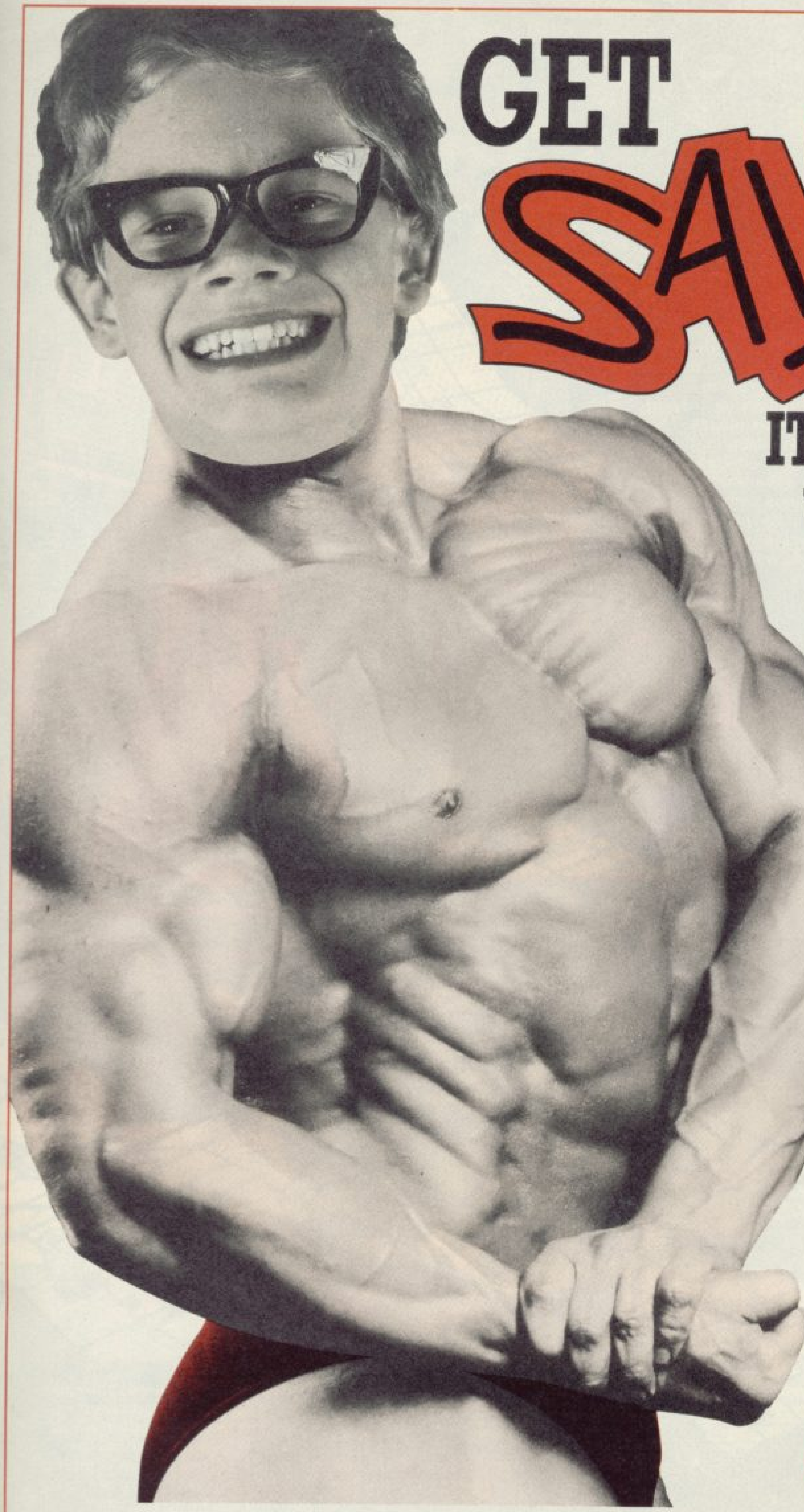
Nice graphics, shame about the face, or something like that

GRAPHICS	SOUND
79	65
42	40
PLAYABILITY	LAST ABILITY

Reviewer: Tony Dillon

OVERALL 54

GET SAVAGE.



IT'S AMAZING WHAT A REAL COMPUTER GAME CAN DO.



Amstrad screen shots

Spectrum cassette £8.99
Commodore 64 cassette £9.99, disc £12.99
Amstrad cassette £8.99, disc £14.99

FIREBIRD

Telecomsoft, First Floor, 64-76 New Oxford St, London WC1A 1PS.
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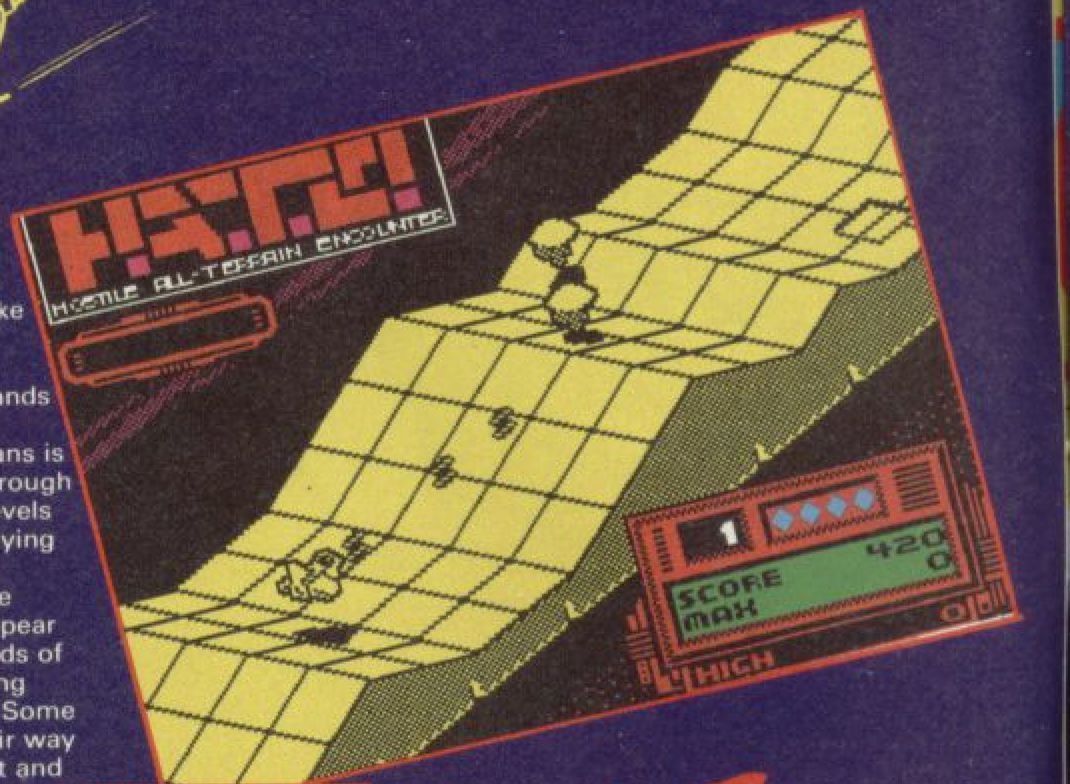
SEE US ON STAND 3447 AT THE P.C. SHOW, EARLS COURT, 14-18 SEPT.

A LEGEND IN GAMES SOFTWAR

GAMES REVIEW!







H A

Now here's somebody we haven't heard from in quite a while. Vortex. Remember them? The crowd wot brought us **Alien Highway** and **Highway Encounter**. The only reason I mention those two in particular when I could have named stuff like **Android 2** and **TLL** is that this, the latest release, is quite similar visually. Still, in true reviewing style, before I get right down to all the nitty gritty bits, why don't I let you know what **HATE** is all about.



To begin with, the **HATE** of the title is not an abject human emotion expressing a distinct dislike to something akin to a mixture of anger and abhorration, it actually stands for Hostile All-Terrain Encounter. What that means is that you have to travel through ten diagonally scrolling levels of hills and valleys destroying all the dangerous nuclear reactors and collecting the fission tubes. Enemies appear in the form of various kinds of kamikaze aliens who spring from holes in the ground. Some then proceed to work their way towards you, weaving left and right across the screen. Others just line themselves up and fire at you.











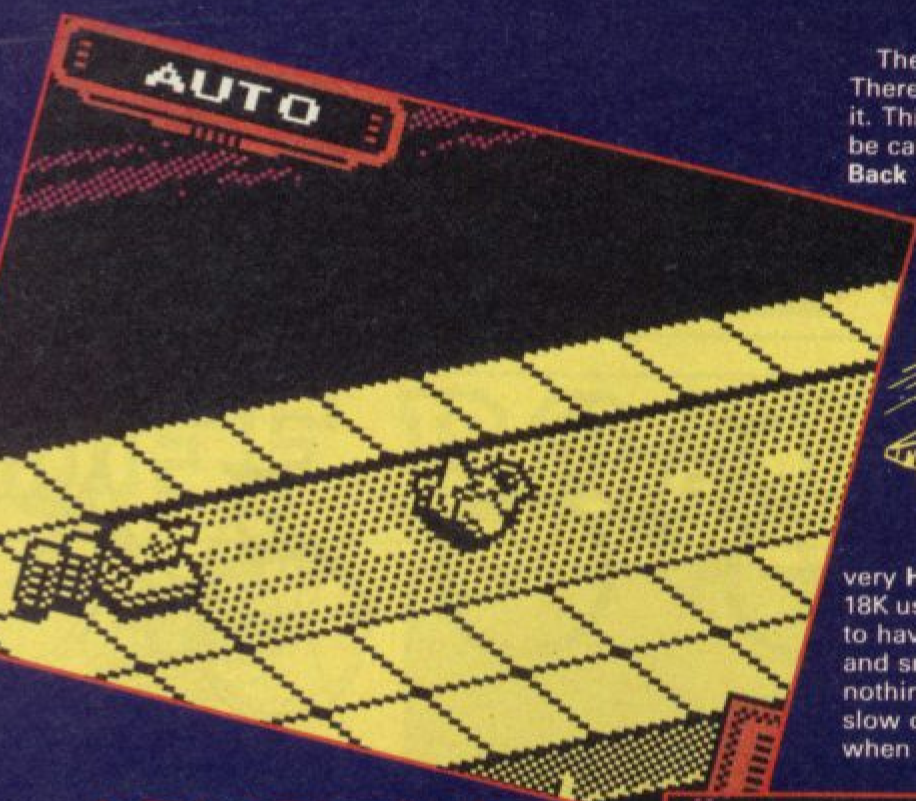


You get to play the pilot of a plane and a tank driver on alternate levels as you progress through the ten screens. The only difference between the two craft is the control system.

When flying the plane, you can't move forward or backward in relation to your position on screen; up and down on the joystick correspond to climbing and diving. When you are driving the tank, you can manoeuvre forward and backwards, as well as left and right.

Still, where does the nuclear bit come in? Well, along the way there are quite a few

T.E.







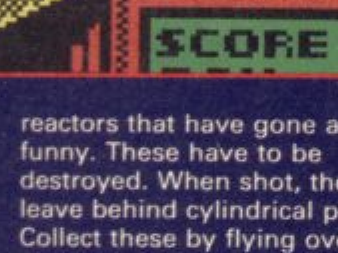








reactors that have gone a bit funny. These have to be destroyed. When shot, they leave behind cylindrical pods. Collect these by flying over them, and they attach themselves to the end of your craft and fly happily along behind you. These pods have two purposes, the first being that you can't complete a level unless you have at least one hanging off your tail. At the end of a level, you come across a shield-like thingy that destroys you if you don't have one. The other thing the pod does is die for you; each one you carry, absorbs one direct hit or collision, which then eradicates the pod.



The graphics are Vortex. There's no other way I can put it. This game could quite easily be called **Highway 3—Freddy's Back** because, yes, it does look very **Highway Encounter**. The 18K used on the scrolling seems to have been wasted. It's nice and smooth when there's nothing on screen, but it does slow down quite noticeably when things begin to appear.

Sound is normal spectrum sound. Nice 128K tune, good spot FX on 48.

HATE is a straightforward blast which won't give you brainache in the gameplay department. It may not be anything revolutionary, but you won't regret giving it a bash



FAX BOX

ARCADE REVIEW

HATE** Label: **Gremlin** Author: **Vortex** Price: **£8.95** Memory: **48K/128K** Joystick: **Various** Reviewer: **Tony Dillon

GRAPHICS	SOUND
82	70
87	78
PLAYABILITY	LAST ABILITY

Well, you won't hate it

Reviewer: Tony Dillon

OVERALL **77**

10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90

COMPETITION



ON YOUR BIKE

(Who wrote that? – GT)

Errr, outstanding! And here we are, ladies and, errr, to examine the performance of the new Soviet shotputter, erm Epyx Software, 'Stordinary. Oh Err, I've just been informed that Epyx isn't in fact, err, a person, but, err, and this is quite extraordinary, um, a games, er, house. Well, upon my soul, Saint.

It appears that they've just completed a program called, Summer Games Winter Special in Calgary Olympiad and, aaah, they're doing a competition, well my lord, with Sinclair User, ooah to win a fantastic bicycle good lord I think I'm having a seizure . . . urk!

Yes. It's all true. We've got a super competition with Epyx and one of you lucky blighters will – assuming you get the right answer – swan off on either a brand spanking new MOUNTAIN BIKE as used by the hyperfashionable courier riders or an ultrazippy RACER as used by, well, racing cyclists I guess.

And why are we offering such a splendiferous competition now, of all times? Well, it's because the amazing Games – Summer Edition is about to be released; that's why – and Epyx are feeling especially happy about it.

The questions:
1) Which piece of Daley Thompson's equipment broke under the pressure of competition in the last Olympics?
2) Is it possible to be arrested for speeding on a bicycle. True or false?

Send your answers to: I'll be having that bike, thankyou! Competition, Sinclair User, 14 Holkham Road, Orton, Peterborough PE2 0UF. Please remember to specify whether you want a mountain bike or racer, if you win!

The coupon:

1)..

2)..

I'd like a racer/mountain bike (delete as appropriate)

Name..

Address..

....

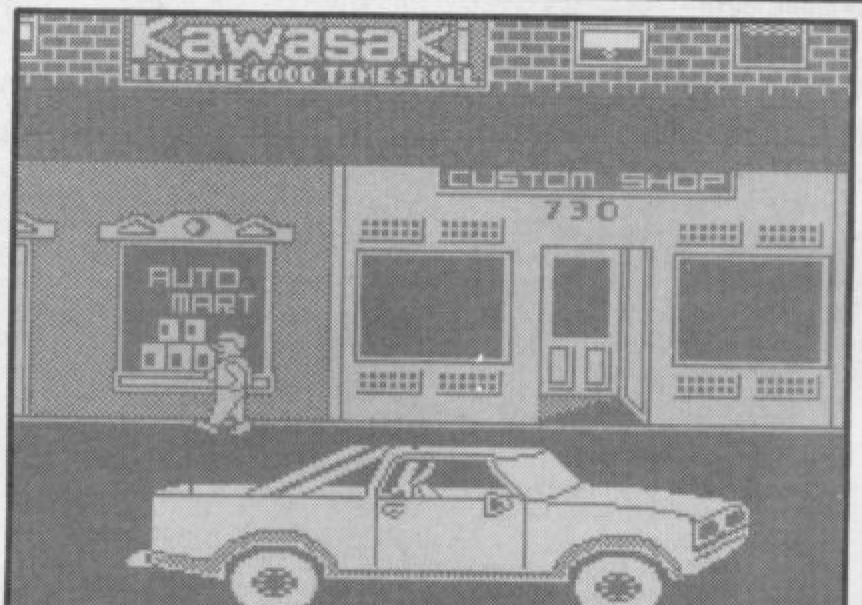
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Note: The bicycles shown here were kindly donated photos from Raleigh, they may not be the bikes available for the winner.

4X4

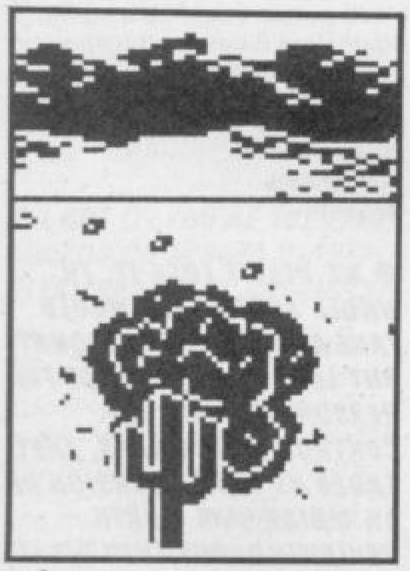
OFF ROAD RACING

GAMES REVIEW!



Good lord. What a catastrophe! **4 x 4 Off Road Racing** is USG's latest attempt at the 3D race game formula, and it really is a rather disastrous affair.

It's based on those frightfully dangerous races across the world when rally enthusiasts risk life and limb in huge sand-going vehicles. Unfortunately something has gone horribly awry during the coding and both graphics and playability have gone to the wall.



Once loaded, you're asked to select which landscape you want to drive through. There's a choice of four, covering the most diverse terrain – dry desert, icy wastes, boggy mudswamps and mountainous canyons. Once this choice has been made, you have to decide which vehicle is best suited to the course you're about to attempt. Although there are only four basic trucks on offer, each is rated on seven factors: weight, gas,mileage, endurance etc. Obviously, each truck has its advantages and disadvantages making it more or less suitable for the different landscapes.

From here, you have to buy all those extras like extra brake fluid and a spare battery from the auto mart shop. Each object has a certain amount of weight which will slow your performance etc, etc. You get the idea?



Okay, so **4x4** is more involved than **Outrun, Wec Le Mans** and the like, and it could be argued that it's more realistic than either of these two, but there's no getting away from the fact that this sort of game has to have convincing and exciting graphics. **4x4** just ain't all there.

Take a look at the picture yourself. It's hardly the most convincing reconstruction of a rally ever, is it? And things remain the same through all the courses. The track rises and falls and swerves around and branches; like **Outrun**. It's also a multi-load. Before you can drive a course you've got to load it from tape.

The sound is a complete farce. There are blips and whistles and rasps thoughout, and a laughable version of the Last Post when you run into a cactus or another obstacle tougher than your truck.

So, who is **4x4** aimed at, then? Tricky to tell. It's neither fish nor fowl. It's not a strategy game and God knows it's hardly an arcade blast. It's certainly to be avoided unless you're very very sure you can't wait until something better comes along, like a bus■

ARCADE REVIEW

FAX BOX

4x4 OFF ROAD RACING *Label:* ***US Gold***
Author: ***In-house*** *Price:* ***£8.95*** *Memory:* ***48K/128K*** *Joystick:* ***Various***

Very disappointing 3-D rally sim. Avoid.

GRAPHICS	SOUND
40	20
55	40
PLAYABILITY	LAST ABILITY

Reviewer: Jim Douglas

OVERALL **40**

10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90



I've got to hand it to you, you must be the biggest pratt ever. You review a game called **Dragon Ninja** (pretty good it looks too!). You review it, but you don't print a flamin' Fax box. How do we know the separate marks. Get it right next time. Also, why don't you put some more colour into your reviews? Some are just black and white, this is not good enough. See to it, if I don't see any changes within the next few months I will shove a 128K Spectrum up your nose sideways. Thank you for listening.
Robert Campion
Exeter
Devon

● ***DRAGON NINJA WE EXPLAINED AWAY ON ANOTHER LETTER. LAST YEAR WE INCREASED THE COLOUR BY ABOUT TEN PAGES. WE'LL TRY TO DO MORE, MEANWHILE TRY COLOURIN' THEM IN YASELF. AN' YA COULD SHOVE A 128K UP MA NOSE SIDEWAYS AN' IT WOULDN'T HURT.***

I've got a few questions to ask. I wrote to "praise the skies" six months ago and it hasn't been printed yet so where the hell is it Kami, eh?

I don't like to say this Kami but the mag is slacking, you're making too many mistakes, like the smash coupons were the wrong way round, plus you've stopped the "stuff it in a box." Why Kami why?

Now I'd just like to point out that the megatape 9 was crap! Bear a grudge is boring (no offence Kami). I played it for about five minutes and switched it off, so then I thought yes! **Operation Wolf**, turned the tape over and loaded it up. AAARRR I screamed, it's crap, graphics OK, the speed is fast, that's the best thing about it, but what got me was that there was no sound, not even a little plip! So I switched it off. But let's face it, it isn't as bad as **Astro Clone!** Sneer with boredom, how could you SU, you've let yourself down there.

Oh yes Kami, who the hell is Wayne Smedley? Please answer that one Kami.

When I get SU I get home as quick as I can and turn to *Tell it to the Bear,* then I play the tape and then read the mag, when I've finished the mag I can't wait 'til next month. Kami, you're so hard nothing can stop you as you charge to the shop for your fruit pastilles, though pathetic people write in to you saying they're going to break your neck. Well we both know they can't.
Carl Monlyneux
Planet Earth

● ***THANKS FER TH' KIND WORDS, CARL OLD MATE. THE LESS SAID ABOUT WAYNE SMEDLEY THE BETTER.***

S'me, Agent X, your faithful spy. Whilst flicking through the pages of *Your Sinclair* (cough!, splutter! I'm still in quarantine y' know!) I spotted slagging-offs such as the mag being called 'Teddy Bear User' and 'That Load of Crap.'

I have taken the liberty of placing a bomb under 'Castle Rambone.' This can be activated by pressing the button on the Mickey Mouse clock (NYAHH! to all those who have slagged Kami for having it. Now you know what it does!) I will return . . . message ends!
Agent X c/o Peter Cassidy
Greenock

● ***THANKS. LETTERS SLAGGING US OFF IN OUR RIVAL MAGS FILL US WITH ABOUT AS MUCH CONCERN AS AN ARMADILLO FEELS ABOUT UNREST IN THE MIDDLE EAST.***

Hi, this letter is coming to you from the land of the long white cloud – New Zealand (boring so far huh?). Well I wouldn't usually waste money on the postage but I feel I must say this – New Zealand is 'crap' (whoops), that should read "New Zealand's selection of software for the speccy is crap. Where you have your Top 20 we'd have the Top 1 and that can be decided by the toss of a coin. The titles available aren't exactly up to date either, try **Knightlore, Nightshade, Saboteur** and they still sell **Jet Set Willy**. Now you can see how bad things really are. One of my latest 'hot' games is **Gauntlet** and as I read through the latest SU (three months behind) I see that **Gauntlet 2** is out (I didn't know, OK) and see yet again how deprived I am.

And so I ask (here it comes) no, I plead that you bring a little sparkle to a poor kid's life and maybe send a few titles I've listed as my Top 10. I'm sure my kiwi friends will take a similar interest in your mag when I tell of your extreme generosity. I need no convincing of your brilliance as this magazine outshines all others I've read (and that's a few) and so, I wish you immortality to all those at SU and hope that by now all your hearts go out to me (but wallets will do).

Humour is your greatest asset
Never let it go
If the laughter ever ceases
Then all will know . . .
SU is no more

SU Reader
New Plymouth
New Zealand

● ***WE DIDN'T BOTHER PRINTIN' THE KIWI'S TOP TWENTY, 'COS WE AIN'T GOT THE FAINTEST INTENTION OF SENDIN' HIM ANYTHIN'. DON'TCHA KNOW HOW MUCH POSTAGE TO NZ COSTS? ENOUGH TO KEEP ME IN FRUIT PASTILLES UNTIL THE YEAR 2089.***

Congratulations for your mag. It is the best Spectrum mag around. I'm writing to you to say how brill you are (I don't want the money).

Here at Portugal, you're the best selling Spectrum mag (as in England). Almost all my friends like to read you (SU). start buying your mag a year ago, and I think you are improving very much. Keep on putting those wonderful megatapes on cover (and try to put more playable demo).

Ah, by the way, an important thing: recently, SU has arrived later than usual. I'm writing in the 13th December and we don't even have the November issue!!! This is very sad and I want to see the bear doing something!!!

YS and Crash (I don't buy them!) arrive here faster than SU, why does this happen? I'm getting desperate! Please, please (a million times). Give me an SU subscription or do something so I buy SU earlier!!!

Bet the bear is generous and gives me an SU subscription free.

Please, Please, Please, Please, Please (I'm getting tired).
Luis Manuel Marins
Lisboa
Portugal

● ***FREE SUBSCRIPTIONS? SOMETIMES AH DON'T GET TA SEE TH' MAG MASELF UNLESS AH FIND ONE IN TH' LITTER BIN!***



Yes we all know you've had little mistakes with your 'Fax Boxes', but in the **Dragon Ninja** review, you lost your faxbox completely. Explain that or I'll punch your teeth so far down, you'll have to brush your bottom to clean them. (Just a small joke). From a great admirer.
Dee
Portishead
Bristol

● ***WE DIDN'T LOSE IT. TH' WHOLE SORRY TALE WOULD TAKE A CENTURY TO RECOUNT, BUT LET'S JUST SAY THAT FER REASONS BEYOND THE CONTROL OF THE GUYS, THEY ENDED UP WITH A VERSION OF DN WHICH WAS WORTH REVIEWING, BUT THEY DIDN'T FEEL ABLE TO GIVE A PROPER RATING. 'COURSE, THEY COULDA PRETENDED AN' RATED IT ANYWAY, BUT THEY'RE TOO HONEST FOR THAT, THE SCHMUCKS!***

I find it unorthodox for a fair maiden to take all her clothes off in a scullery. I mean . . . in a scullery I ask you? Didn't manage to find those photographs Mrs Aintree asked me to find. Sorry!! I sat in the Autumnleaves, underneath a huge sycamore tree, whilst I nibbled at my watchstrap. This is all to do with antiestablishmentarism and polysaturates or something on those lines.



You got a comment? You got something to say? You got an opinion about what's good and bad. Wanna praise the mag? Wanna heap some indignation and kick a few butts? Don't keep it to yourself, just put your thoughts down on paper and TELL IT TO THE BEAR!

Kamikaze don't mess around. I'll print anything that got something to say with a name and address on it (No address no printy yellowbelly) you jus tell me all about it and send your message to 'Tell it to the Bear', SU Central, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU

I visited my old school last week, still tastes the same as before, although the trains run later these days. Anyway gotta go, got heaps of absolutely nothing to do in the basement . . . and Darnall Town have scored . . . Amazing!
The Klogue
Chelmsford
Essex

● I GOT IT! YOU'RE THE FIRST CUCKOO OF SPRING RIGHT? SEEK TREATMENT URGENTLY.

Either you send £30,000 in used cash to the address below or I'll send my personal heavymob round with Toby the dog as their leader and some nasty things may happen to you and the rest of the SU staff.
Neil "Mean" Mercer
Swindon
Wiltshire

● GO TO YOUR FRONT DOOR. OPEN IT. LOOK DOWN THE ROAD. SEE THAT TANK? THAT'S ME. I HAVEN'T GOT THE MONEY THOUGH.

What a blinking stupid thing to do, what am I talking about? Eating 2 billion raw eggs, no, you stupid things, putting a form for the *Write Stuff* on one side and a competition entry form on the other. So be careful next time, and I'm getting rather peeved at you lot not printing any of my letters ever and I never win any competitions, so in future I expect to see every one of my letters and win every comp.
J Wignall
Preston
Lancs

● AH GUESS THAT REELY TOLD US. EXCEPT AH KIN EAT MORE EGGS THAN THAT WITHOUT BEIN' SICK.

I have just started to buy your mag (which is brill). After reading last month's edition I went on my computer to play Megatape 11, before **Beachhead 1** etc there was a bit at the beginning of the tape which did nothing at all except print Bites 3, and Bites 4 and Bites 5 on the screen. Please could you tell me what it does.
Chris Newton
Hardwick
Stockton-on-Tees

● BITES? DON'T YOU MEAN BYTES? THIS IS JUST A BIT OF CODE LOADING. DOES YOUR GAME WORK OR NOT? IF NOT THEN SORRY, SEND IT IN AND WE'LL REPLACE IT. IF YES THEN GO AWAY . . .

How ya doin'? I've just written to tell you about a hot new fanzine that's about to hit the streets. It is called *'The Equalizer'* and costs 30p. If you're interested write to *The Equaliser*, c/o Jonathon Cole, 13 Laski Court, Dalton Close, Crawley, West Sussex RH11 8JN, and enclose 30p and a large S.A.E.
Jonathon Cole
Crawley
West Sussex

● OK.

PRAISE SU TO THE SKIES!!

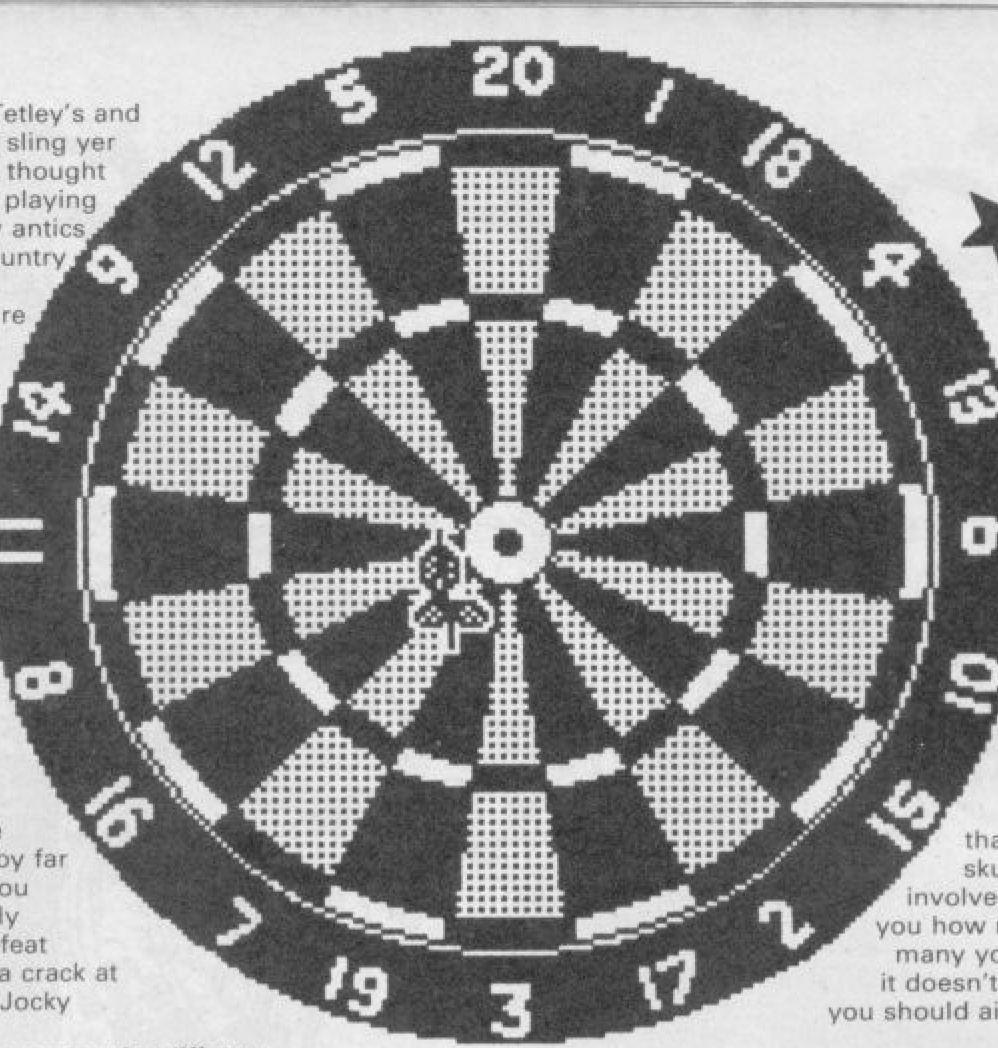
Dear absolutely brilliant people at SU, with the incredibly big brains. I spent 18 days of complete and utter boredom at the start of the month waiting for my issue of SU to come through the post and brighten up my whole day, and to see the absolutely, flabbergastingly brilliant work of El Presidente with the amazing brain power. Tony Dillon with billions of brain cells, and the rest of the team, clever Chris Jenkins, the brillliant Jim Douglas and Tamara Howard. If I was a girl I would swoon at the amazing cover picture, and the even better cool megatapes. Kamikaze, the mean killing machine, really turns the magazine into more than your usual, average Speccy mag. I have just fainted at the fab work.

Oh great immortal people at SU, you can't be of the human race to be able to bring us 100 pages of pure magic and enjoyment every month for a mere £1.60. Yours in complete and utter amazedness.
Peter Hamilton
Belfast

● OK, FAIRLY GROVELLY. YOU ALMOST BLEW IT ON THE REFERENCE TO LA HOWARD; DON'T CHA KNOW SHE'S PUSHED OFF YET? ALL GIRLIE BRILLIANCE IS NOW PROVIDED BY ALISON SKEAT, AN' DON'T YA FERGIT IT.



GAMES REVIEW!



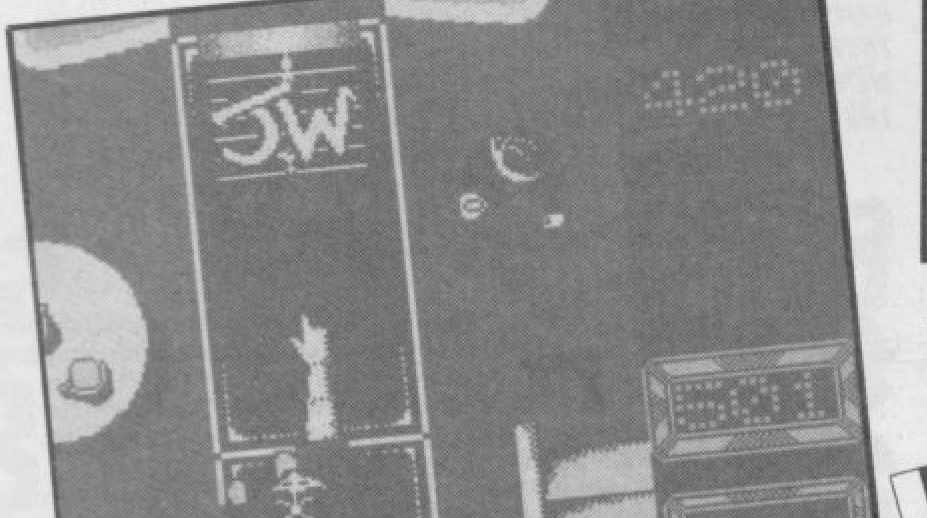
Eee. Take a sup o'yer Tetley's and waddle up t'oche and sling yer arras, lad. Magic. The thought of spending any time at all playing a game based on the beery antics of the fattest men in the country (whether they be Members – fyak – of the British Empire or not) didn't do much to excite me.

So imagine my disgust to find that **Jocky Wilson's Darts Challenge** isn't a dreadful flask of cat squirt after all. In fact, it's very good indeed.

There are three stages of the game; Head to Head is for two players, each trying to score 501 before the other. Round the Clock speaks for itself really – you must try to work your way from numbers 1 to 20 in the shortest possible time. The Championship, though, is by far the most exciting, where you play against a host of wittily monickered opponents. Defeat them all and you can take a crack at the "big" man himself . . . Jocky Wilsonnnnn!

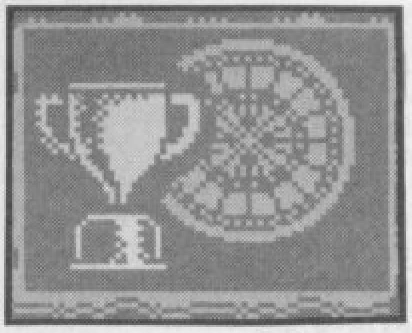
Although the different stages require different strategies, the core of the game is how realistically the "arras" are "bunged". Obviously a degree of wobblyness has had to be

JOCKY WILSON'S DARTS CHALLENGE



incorporated – when was the last time you saw a darts player with a perfectly steady arm? Here we have to live with a sort of perpetual drift which causes your ghost-like dart to move in circular motions at the time. Not a bad solution to the problem, although I'd like to think that in real life I could hold myself a little bit more steady than this. Still, if all the fun of the sport is to be captured, I guess all the effects of the beer must be included too.

Once you've thrown your darts it's the turn of the machine. You get a plan view of the oche and board with an extremely unrealistically slim darts player who regularly throws straight 180s.



The more successful you are, the tougher your opponents become, throwing darts with astonishing accuracy.

Obviously I never managed to challenge The Jock himself, but I was surprised quite how addictive I found this game. Even though I loathe and despise darts in every form, Jocky W had me reasonably enthralled for a lengthy period. You are thankfully spared all the skull splittingly dull maths involved, as the computer tells you how many you scored, how many you need etc. The only thing it doesn't do is suggest which shot you should aim for.

Since I'm especially incontinent (eh – GT) when it comes to getting to grips with figures (arf, arf – AS) this would have been a bit of a boon, but I'm sure it would only be of use in especially dense players.

So there we are then. Corpulent Darts Star in Successful Licence Shock. A super bargain. Smashing. Lovely■

FAX BOX

ARCADE REVIEW

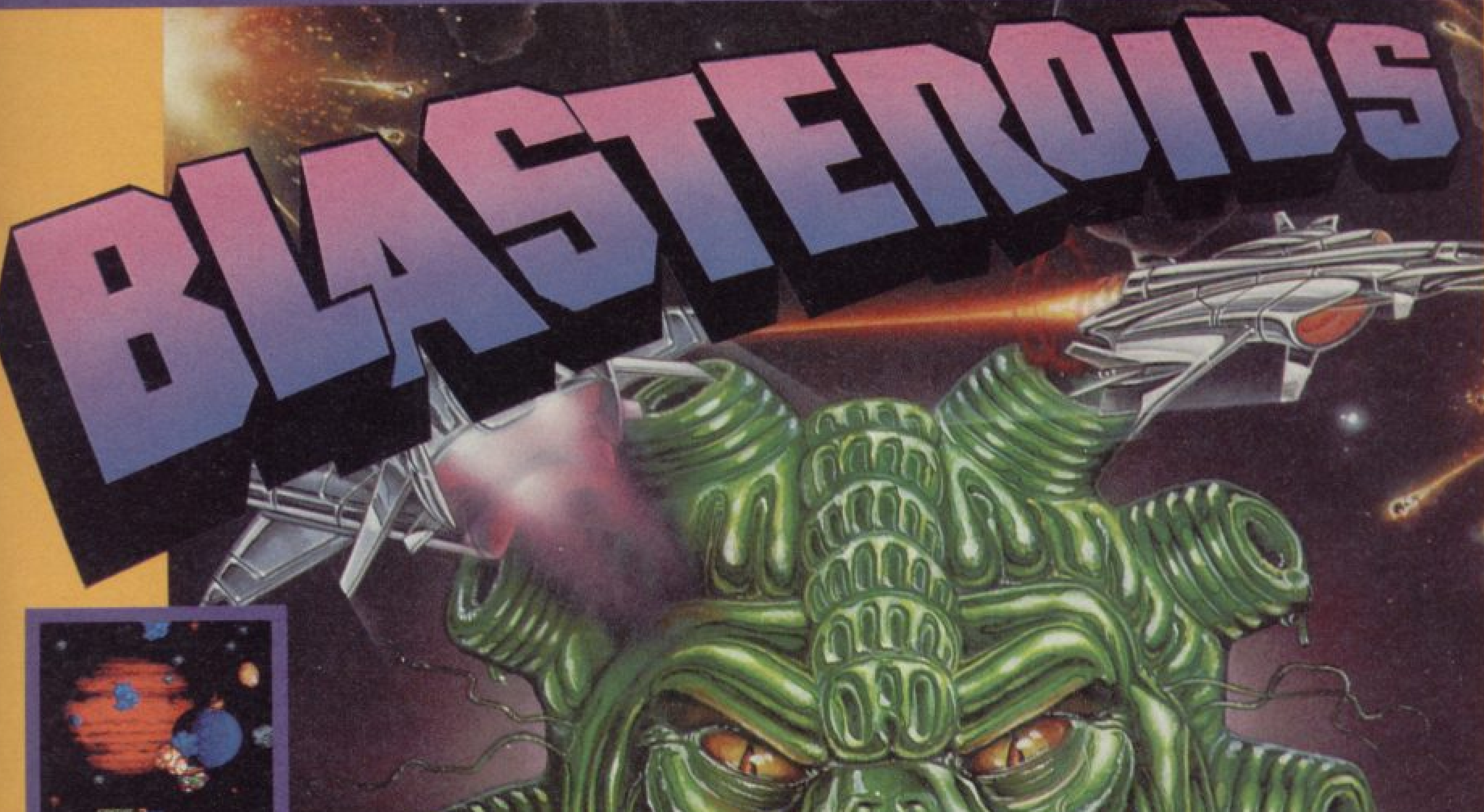
JOCKY WILSON'S DARTS CHALLENGE
Label: **Zeppelin** Author: **In-house** Price: **£2.99** Memory: **48K/128K** Joystick: **Various**

Super smashing lovely lovely darts sim.

Reviewer: Jim Douglas

GRAPHICS	SOUND	PLAYABILITY	LASTABILITY	OVERALL
66	60	74	69	68

FULL WARNING STATUS: CONDITION RED





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LEAF-BLA

1	EUROPEAN 5 A SIDE	FIREBIRD	SIMULATION
2	ADVANCED PINBALL SIMULATOR	CODE MASTERS	
3	FOOTBALLER OF THE YEAR	KIXX	
4	LEADERBOARD	KIXX	
5	FORMULA GRAND PRIX	ALTERNATIVE	

1	ROBOCOP	OCEAN	ARCADE
2	OPERATION WOLF	ACTIVISION	
3	DOUBLE DRAGON	MELBOURNE HOUSE	
4	THUNDERBLADE	US GOLD	
5	GIANTS	US GOLD	

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FULL PRICE 20

1	NEW!	ROBOCOP Brilliant – captures the mood of the film perfectly	OCEAN £8.95	94%
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4	(1)	DOUBLE DRAGON Disappointing two player karate coin-op conv	MELBOURNE HOUSE £9.99	51%
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9	(4)	FOOTBALL MANAGER 2 An improvement on the legendary game, plays brilliantly	ADDICTIVE £9.99	94%
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11	(15)	GAME SET AND MATCH 2 Good collection of sporty games	OCEAN £12.95	84%
12	(13)	RETURN OF THE JEDI Faithful but uninspiring coin-op conv	DOMARK £9.95	60%
13	NEW!	IN CROWD Another good value compilation from Ocean	OCEAN £14.95	80%
14	NEW!	FOUR SOCCER SIMULATORS Tedious collection of football games	CODE MASTERS £8.99	42%
15	(11)	TAITO COIN-OPS Good value package of good and bad convs	OCEAN £12.95	73%
16	(7)	SUPREME CHALLENGE Excellent compilation of excellent games	BEAU JOLLY £12.95	84%
17	NEW!	PACMANIA Technically excellent coin-op of 3D Pacman game	GRANDSLAM £8.95	79%
18	(5)	DALEY THOMPSON'S OLYMPIC CHALLENGE Graphically impressive but slightly same sports sim	OCEAN £9.99	85%
19	NEW!	RAMBO 3 Disappointing licence – missed opportunity	OCEAN £8.95	64%
20	(14)	ROADBLASTERS Nice looking coin-op conversion with both racing and shooting	US GOLD £8.99	81%

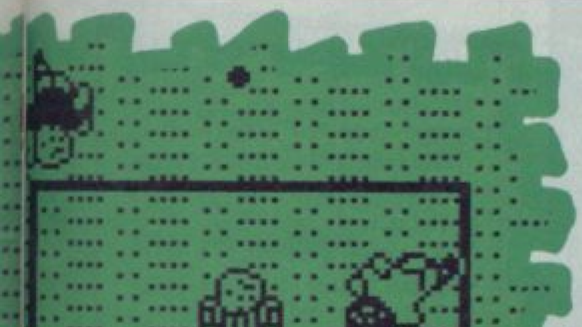
HOT BUDGET

Oh no! Why is Ghostbusters number one? Who bought it? Well go and stand in the corner and write "it's a boring game and doesn't have great sound like the C64 version" two thousand times. Other than that both Skooldaze games are in the chart, as are two, count 'em, Codemasters titles. But all in all there aren't very many original titles in the chart are there? . . . What's happened to all that first class Mastertronic material we used to see?

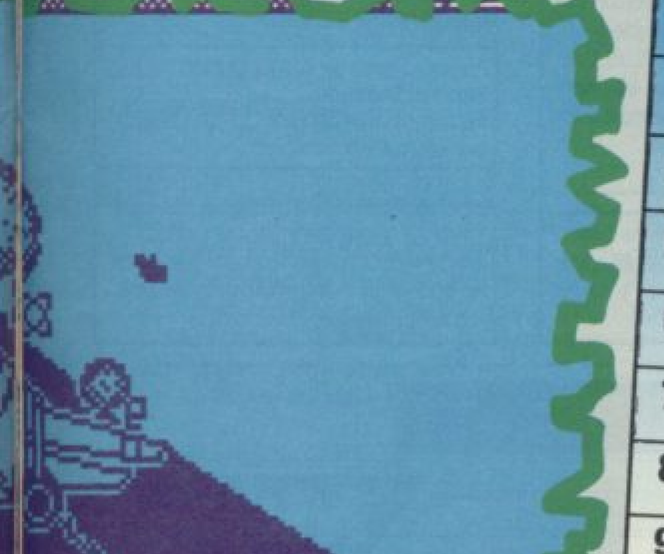




SU CHARTS







HOT FULL PRICE



Seems even mega releases aren't sure of endless weeks in the top slot. Operation Wolf and Afterburner have both had their moment only to be replaced by Robocop. How transitory it all is. Still at least there are a few new entries. Pacmania could be an outside bet for number one – aren't Grand Slam doing well? Just outside the chart Heroes of the Lance could be the first Adventure to do well since Bard's Tale.

BUDGET 10

1	*NEW!*	**GHOSTBUSTERS** Rerelease of poor, though popular movie tie-in	**MASTERTRONIC** *£1.99* **42%**
2	(7)	**EUROPEAN FIVE A SIDE** Original entertaining overhead football game	**FIREBIRD** *£1.99* **70%**
3	*NEW!*	**SKOOLDAZE** Original, inventive and funny. Not for swots!	**ALTERNATIVE** *£1.99* **85%**
4	(1)	**JOE BLADE 2** Fallen from top position at last	**PLAYERS** *£2.99* **55%**
5	(3)	**ADVANCED PINBALL SIMULATOR** Below average pinball game	**CODE MASTERS** *£1.99* **42%**
6	(2)	**BOMBJACK** Action packed coin op conv – good value	**ENCORE** *£1.99* **70%**
7	*NEW!*	**BACK TO SKOOL** Follow up to Skooldaze. Somehow less funny	**ALTERNATIVE** *£2.99* **70%**
8	(4)	**PRO SKATEBOARD SIMULATOR** 720° goes budget	**CODE MASTERS** *£1.99* **78%**
9	(6)	**COMMANDO** Influential vertical scrolling shoot-'em-up	**ENCORE** *£2.99* **70%**
10	(8)	**FOOTBALLER OF THE YEAR** Unusual angle on a football theme	**KIXX** *£2.99* **81%**

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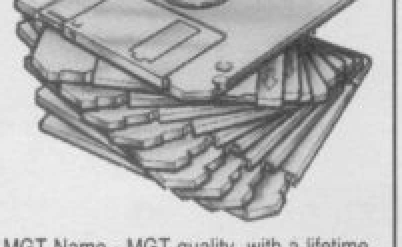
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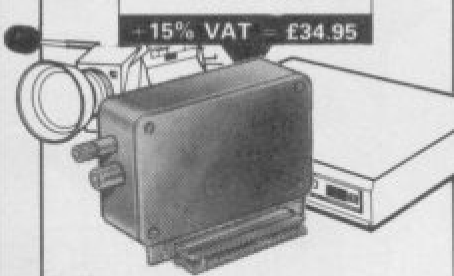
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COMPETITION

PAC-LAND

Who's the most popular character ever to emerge from the coin-op industry? No, not the man with the big machine-gun in Operation Wolf **it's** Pacman, **the jolly little pill-gobbling chappie who practically kicked off the whole coin-op business, and who is still going strong thingty-splunge years later.**

Now we're giving you the chance to win all sorts of zany limited-edition Pacman **memorabilia in a doltishly-simple competition, courtesy of those Grandslam gamesters.**



FIVE lucky winners will get a PACMAN GIFT COLLECTION, featuring a selection of Pacman **products in the way of mugs, posters, T-shirts, all bundled up in an executive-style** Pacman **case which you could put your sandwiches in, or use for important executive-style meetings (if you don't mind people sniggering at you). All you have to do is answer the questions, fill in the form and bung it off to the competition address. Couldn't be simpler if it was Wayne Smedley.**

---

1) **What is Grandslam's latest** Pacman **game title?**
   A) Pacman's Party B) Pacmania C) Paction Man
2) **What are the baddies in the** Pacman **games called?**
   A) Ghosts B) Ghoulies C) Gobblies
3) Pacman's **favourite food is**
   A) Power Pills B) Smarties C) Cough Drops

NAME..

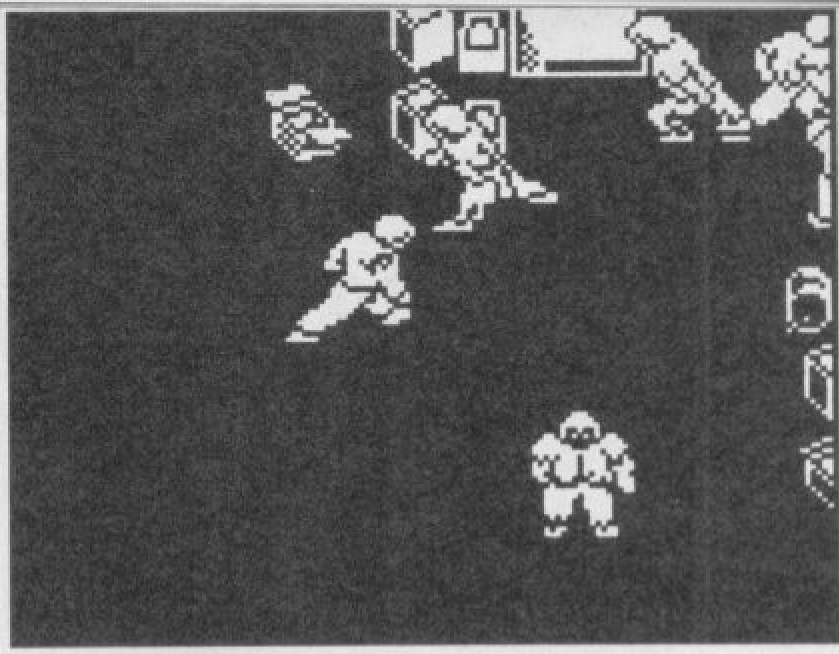
ADDRESS..

.... **POSTCODE**..................

Send to Pacman Contest, Sinclair User, 14 Holkham Court, Orton, Peterborough PE2 0UF. Closing date is 31st March. No cutesy coin-op characters may enter.

GAMES REVIEW!

MOTOR MASSACRE



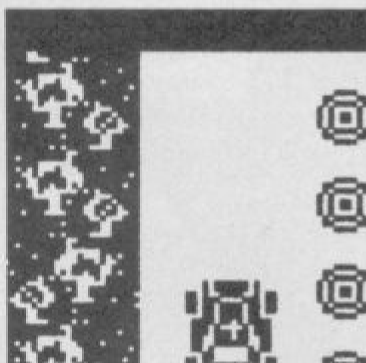
Right. Let's get my major gripe about this game out of the way first of all. The loading system is very stupid. Even in 128K mode you continually have to rewind the tape when you've been killed, even if you have progressed to no further levels which may have filled up the machine (throught subsequent level-loads). There is apparently no good reason for this and it is very stupid and annoying, especially if you haven't got a tape counter, as I believe most Plus 2 owners don't.

Unfortunately, nothing happened while I was playing the game to make up for this steaming error, and the longer I searched for the Big Redeeming Feature (I think we'll use BRFs more in future) the more frustrated and disappointed I became. Still, I'll try to remain calm and explain my gripes.

The plot. Biochemical Holocaust. Not much food. Doctor A. Noid (zzzz) starts distributing addictive expensive food substitute and taking over the world. Nomadic drivers scavenge for food and petrol. Doc's empire spreads, zombiefying most of the populace. You must track him down and destroy him.

The game is a little confusing at the start. Initially you're shown a plan view of the current city areas. Driving your car is straightforward and the screen scrolls in four directions perfectly acceptably. The control options are a bit naff, though. It's a rotate left/right accelerate/decelerate affair. On the ST or Amiga you've got an option of N.E.S.W. directional control, but on the Spec you're stuck with it.

While the graphics are certainly anything but spectacular, they're smooth and quick and you can tell – largely – what everything is. Having said that, I couldn't remember which was the front of my car, though, and kept reversing into things. It's similar to Ocean's **Miami vice** in style. The bad guys will ram you and damage your car. You can either avoid or shoot them. All the time you're looking for food malls and other buildings; one of which contains a pass to The Athena, where the Doc is to be found.

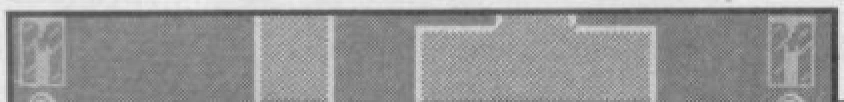


Once you enter a mall, the screen changes as you leap from your car into a **Gauntlet**-style run-around and shoot the hundreds of bad guys affair. This is a bit more like it! The baddies squish into the floor when you plug them and there are lots of keys to find and rooms to explore. Even if there is no Arena pass to be found, it's worth exploring 'cos you could find some scraps of real food which you can trade for auto parts at . . . The Gas Station.

Even in post/holocaust society the gas station attendants are very polite, so long as you keep them happy with food, and you can fix up your car with a host of extra features. Well, four add-ons. Almost half those listed in the instructions aren't available on the Spectrum. These make you go faster, shoot further and stop quicker. You get the idea.

The final stage involves a demolition derby around the arena, taking out enemy cars as quick as you like.

Motor Massacre is a perfectly reasonable game idea, horribly





Marble Madness, but a bit more pinbally . . . that sounds like a good idea for a game. Mix in a bit of platforms and ladders here and there, by using over four interconnecting levels, linked by holes and air-lifts. (Getting better all the time.) Add some progressive elements, like being able to change size and mass to get through difficult sections. PERFECT!!!

It's not. It's far from it, (say this very quietly) it doesn't quite live up to the hype. All the elements are there, but, here comes that magic word – playability– the game just doesn't hang together and what you are left with is a rather boring isometric maze game. It's not even particularly well executed.

In short, you are Private (please insert name of your choice, like parts or bits) and you have to locate and rescue Colonel In Chief Matt Ridley, who quite cleverly, decided to take a crack at the awesome Death Run, and is now imprisoned within its walls. You have to climb aboard your battle sphere and head into the Death Run. Land of unplayability and jerky

FAX BOX

ARCADE REVIEW

MOTOR MASSACRE *Label:* **Gremlin Graphics** *Author:* **Sentient Software** *Price:* **£7.95** *Memory:* **48K/128K** *Joystick:* **Various**

GRAPHICS	SOUND	PLAYABILITY	LAST ABILITY	OVERALL
55	60	65	61	61

Good concept, let down by atrocious errors

Reviewer: Jim Douglas

let down by some truly ridiculous flaws. The eternal reloading is farcical, the controls for the Street section irritating and there are other annoying inconsistencies. Try to climb down the stairs which produce the bad guys in the malls prompts the message "You have fallen to your death." Presumably people forgot how to do complicated things like negotiate staircases during the holocaust. Pah■

GAMES REVIEW

Incredible Shrinking Sphere

scrolling.

The Death Run is a little 3D maze set over four planes. At the start of the game you can display maps of all four mazes in the 'deploy your ammunition dumps'. You have four dumps – supplies of ammo to help you survive in the game – so obviously the most sensible thing to do is place one on each level.

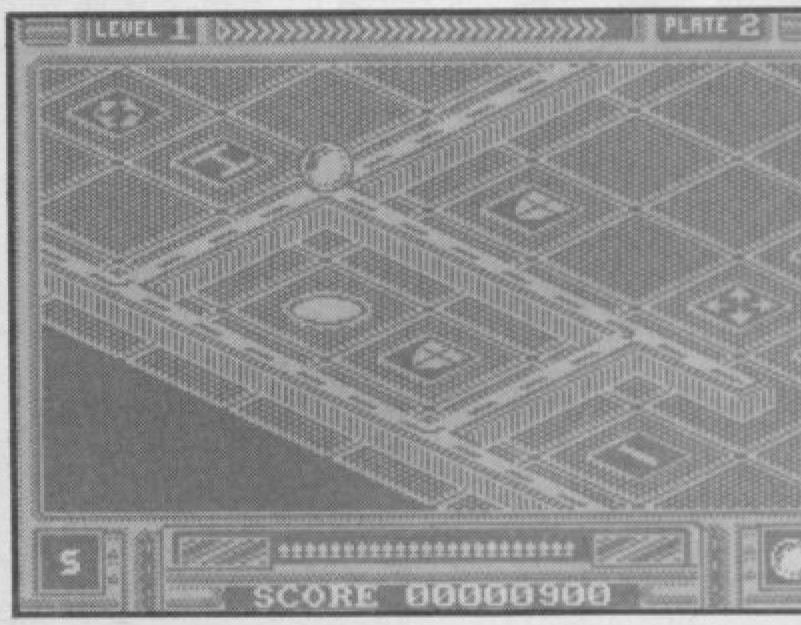
In the game itself, the maze is displayed as a scrolling isometric map, with lots of walls and special tiles and things, and in the middle of it all is you, the battlesphere. The walls are there to stop you moving in a certain direction, and the special tiles are there to do special things. A plus sign on a tile increases your battlesphere's size, and a tile with four arrows pointing inward reverses the effect. A question mark randomly changes mass and size every time you cross it.

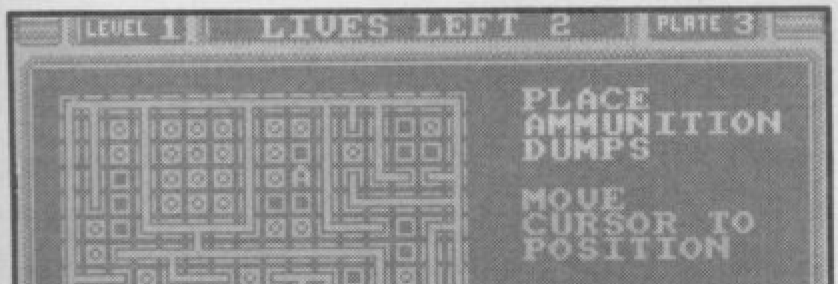
Mass and size play important parts in getting through some key trouble spots in the maze. The denser you are (and no missus, I don't mean stupid) the more powerful you become. Unfortunately, when you are lumping around something of that mass, it gets a bit uncontrollable. Well, even more uncontrollable than it already is. Size can also be important. The smaller you are, the more likely you are to be splatted should you rush into a nasty, but being small also means that you can get through some narrow gaps a lot easier.

Graphics are OK to a point, but the scrolling is dire. It just shouldn't be allowed. Now come on, this is 1989! I can take a bit of jerkyness at slow speeds – it's always a problem. But this game stays jerky, no matter how fast you go.

It plays like, well, something that doesn't play very well. The rebounding effect off walls and things is a little eratic and normally sends you flying at high speed regardless of your original speed. At high speed, the game collapses almost completely. It seems the only way you're going to keep control is by moving very, very slowly. Now I'm no hopeless cripple at computer games, but even I couldn't keep control of this baby. Scratch another few points.

ISS *could* have been very good, but as it ended up, it isn't. What a huge disappointment from the people that brought you **R-Type** and **Afterburner**■





FAX BOX

ARCADE REVIEW

ISS *Label:* **Activision** *Author:* **In-house** *Price:* **£8.95** *Memory:* **48K/128K** *Joystick:* **Various**

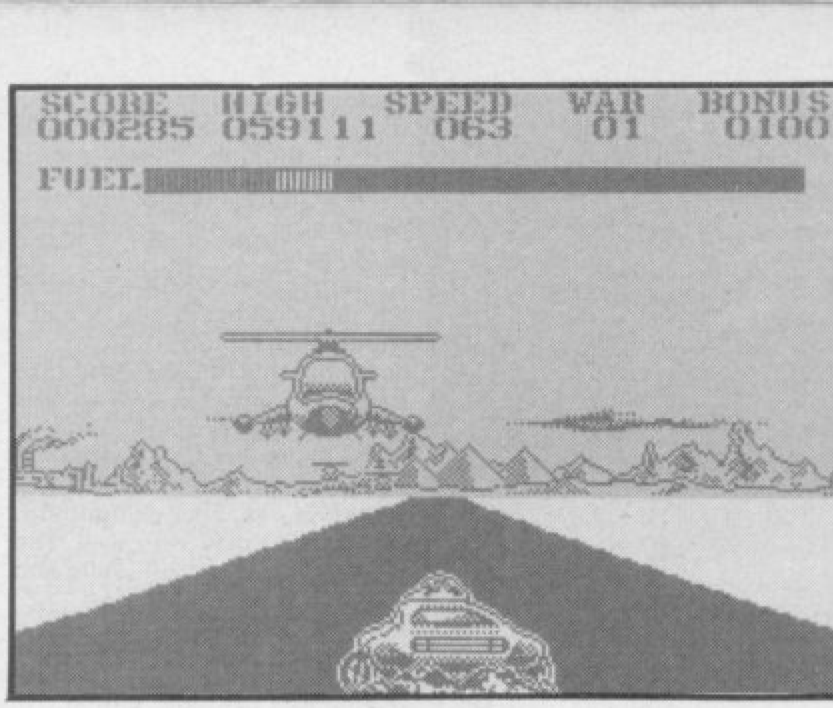
GRAPHICS	SOUND	PLAYABILITY	LAST ABILITY	OVERALL
69	61	43	35	58

Unplayable, badly scrolled, poorly executed heap constructed about a nice game idea.

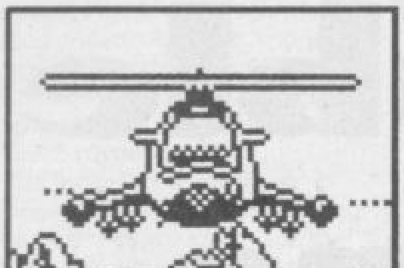
Reviewer: Tony Dillon

GAMES REVIEW!





Outrun. **Overlander. 4x4 Racer.** And now **Fire and Forget**. What do they have in common? Twisting roadways, supposedly exciting gut-wrenching racing action,



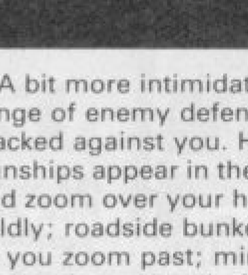
FIRE AND FORGET



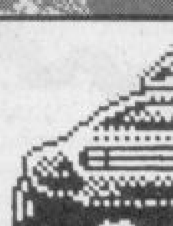
varying amounts of blasting and a numbing sense of familiarity. **Fire and Forget** might look good from the screen shots, but decent graphic design and a lot of movement doesn't necessarily make a good game.

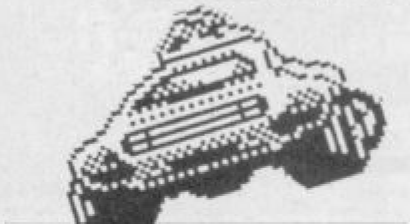
Anyoldhow, in **FAF** the Earth is in turmoil, as the inter-galactic liberation organisation destroys cities and takes other hostage. You take command of Thundermaster, supposedly the planet's most sophisticated fighting machine, but in fact looking more like Jim's knackered banger (fnar) with a machine gun bolted on. You have to complete three levels in each of six warzones in order to defeat the terrorists.

Background graphics, moving objects and scrolling *are all well implemented. The* road snakes from side to side and up and down as you steer your twisting vehicle along at the highest possible speed. Fuel consumption, which is indicated by a meter at the top of the screen, isn't related to speed, so it's in your interests to go as fast as possible in order to pick up fuel pods as soon as possible. These take the form of pyramidical (eh? – GT) tanks, and are dead easy to pick up; in fact you can hardly avoid them, since they're scattered all over the road. Not much challenge there then.

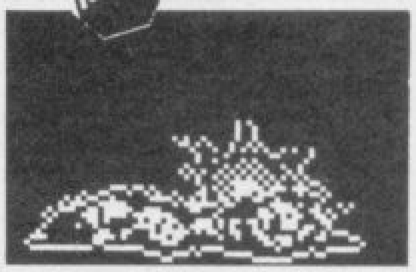


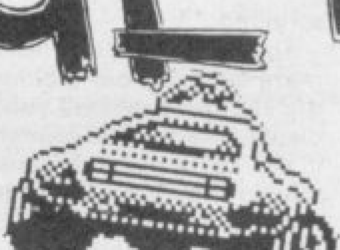
A bit more intimidating is the range of enemy defences stacked against you. Helicopter gunships appear in the distance and zoom over your head firing wildly; roadside bunkers let fly as you zoom past; mines litter the roadway ahead of you; barbed wire defends the side of the road, and rocks block your

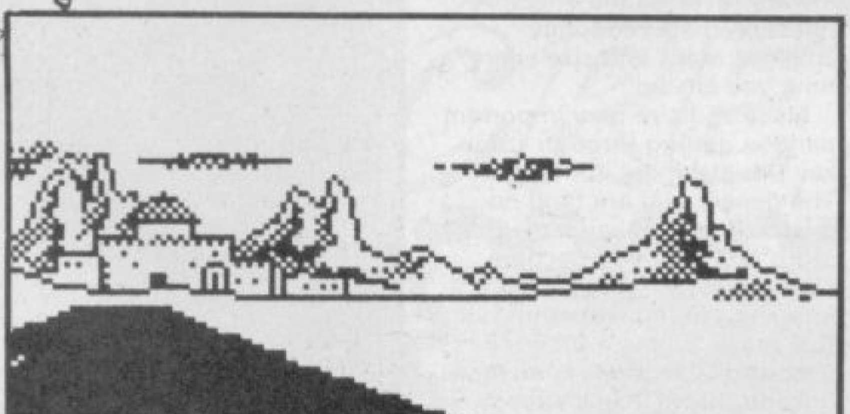




way. Each target you blast with your tetranuclear propulsion missiles (guided by undecodable aural frequency and magnetic sustenation MV module with a firepower of 117 gigawatts per second – oh COME ON, who are you KIDDING!?) earns you points, from 5000 for a rock (easy target, see) to 50000 for a tank (almost indestructible). That was a long and convoluted sentence, wasn't it? Are you still with me? Each time you're hit,







10000 points are deducted from your score. If this falls to zero, or if you run out of fuel, the game's over, and jolly grateful you should be too. Despite decent whizz-bang sound FX, **Fire and Forget** – the term refers to guided missiles, if you haven't twigged – is best fired and forgotten. It's decently programmed and looks nice, but moves too fast for you to feel that you're really in control of what's happening. It's just a case of holding down the fire button, waggling the joystick and hoping you hit something. And that's not much fun, is it lads?■

ARCADE REVIEW

FAX BOX

FIRE AND FORGET** Label: **Titus** Author: **In-house** Price: **£8.95** Memory: **48K/128K** Joystick: **Various

GRAPHICS	SOUND
75	69
45	44
PLAYABILITY	LAST ABILITY

Fast-moving but derivative race-'em-up.

Reviewer:

OVERALL 47

10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90

The CRUCIAL COMPILATION

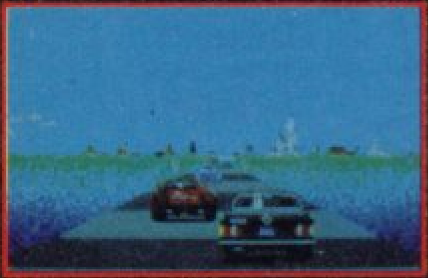




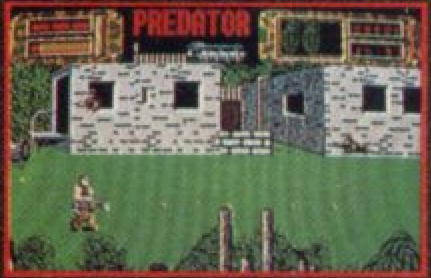
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"If you're looking for a high speed action-packed game that's good to look at and exciting to play – grab Gryzor now!" Your Sinclair
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BARBARIAN
"It's reputation for being the most bloodthirsty computer game ever, means that its phenomenal success will undoubtedly continue." Sinclair User
© Palace Software Ltd



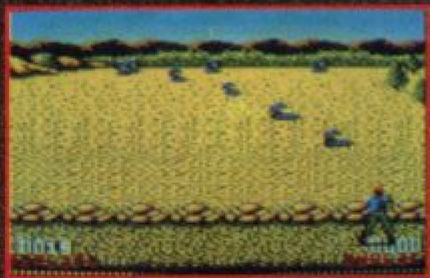
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"Crazy Cars is a three-dimensional real-time simulation. This must be the ultimate car game." Sinclair User
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PREDATOR
"Predator is a superb tie-in and really hits the mark." ZZAP! Sizzler
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"Stunningly colourful screens ... the most accurate conversion of an arcade hit in years" Your Sinclair
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COMBAT SCHOOL
"Combat School is brilliant – definitely the best arcade conversion around." Zzap 64
"Combat School is one of the best games I've ever played." Crash
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TARGET RENEGADE
A Crash Smash
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PLATOON
"The programmers have done a superb job, and have faithfully captured the film's atmosphere. Platoon is absolutely superb – a milestone in film tie-ins, and a yardstick by which all others shall be judged." Zzap 64
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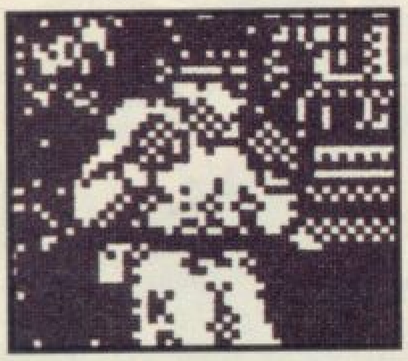
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GAMES REVIEW!

HUM KILL MAC

Human Killing Machine – a name to raise questions in the Houses of Parliament. The follow up to **Streetfighter** is just as violent as you'd expect and just as entertaining. You could complain that it isn't really much different to the original, but who cares really? It's well executed and looks fine.

The same idea as before: kicky kicky against a variety of people. Visit five exotic locations: Moscow, Amsterdam, Barcelona, Germany and Beirut and beat up the locals. Each city's representative uses a certain fighting style that will test many skills. You'll need to mix punches and leg sweeps with kicks and somersaults and sometimes, just running away will help you survive.









First up on your international tour of violence is Russian hard man called Igor. He thumps you with his rifle and is, considering this is the first level amazingly difficult to beat. Still he's not that agile – certainly not as agile as his trusty dog Shepski (aaargghh) which leaps at your viciously but isn't immune to a





AN ING HINE

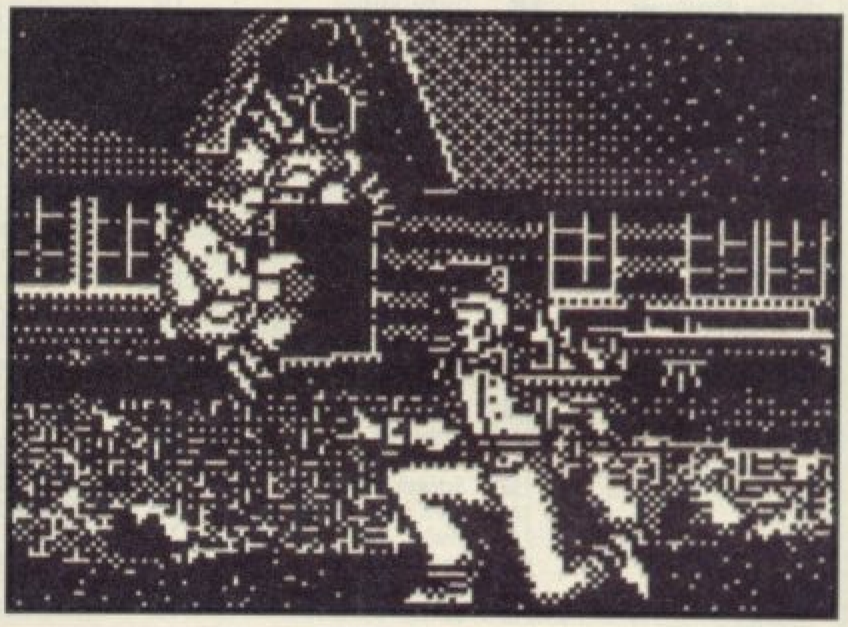
team actually (who's that then – Jim? – AS).

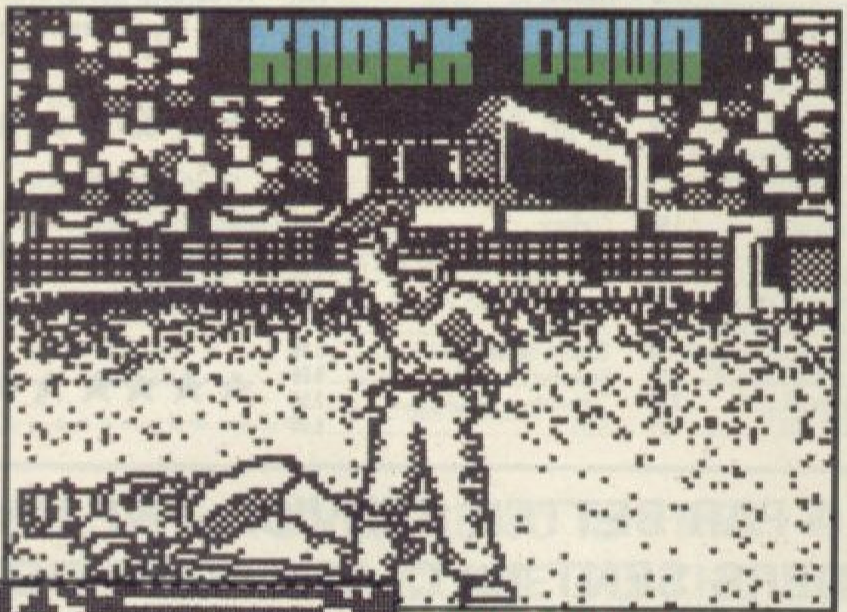
On then to Spain with Miguel who does dangerous things with his cane. After that it's a bull, a comedy German, an arab and a giant. A cliché from almost every part of the world, in fact . . .

Backgrounds are static but detailed, but since the whole thing is in black and white this is the least you'd expect. Main graphics are nicely animated with slick arm and leg movements – maybe the best I've seen in this sort of game. Even the animals which are intrinsically harder to animate are pretty successful.

OK there isn't anything new here but if you lurved **Streetfighter** you'll almost certainly lurve this. The graphics may even be slightly better and some of the moves are different. My only criticism is that maybe the first level of the game is too difficult. Still it'll ensure some credibility attaches to cracking all five levels. With a dearth of decent software releases this looks like being one of the few worthwhile games we're likely to see for some while.

GAMES REVIEW









little boot treatment.

Now it's on to Amsterdam (isn't this just like the Travel Show?) and the lovely Maria. Maria is agile and leaps about a lot. Maria has a friend called Helga who is not so agile but punches people a lot. A bit like one of the more female members of the SU editorial

HITS AND TIPS

- **Watch out for Igor the Russian soldier. His fighting style includes vicious blows with his rifle. To defeat try to get him in the corner and finish him off with low sweeping kicks to the belly.**
- **Shepski (great gag) the dog is Igor's trusty hound. Again low sweeping kicks are the way to finish him.**
- **Maria is very quick with a large number of moves. She gets out of trouble by leaping aobut and comes with a very effective kick. You lose energy fast. The only solution – a lot of front kicks mixed with low sweeping slides.**
- **Helga – watch out for her punch. You can lose half your energy in one go.**

FAX BOX

ARCADE REVIEW

HUMAN KILLING MACHINE *Label:* **US Gold** *Author:* **Tiertex** *Price:* **£8.99** *Memory:* **48K/128K** *Joystick:* **Various**

Great Streetfighter sequel. More action and variety.

Reviewer: Graham Taylor

GRAPHICS	SOUND
82	65
80	78
PLAYABILITY	LAST ABILITY

OVERALL **78**

10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90

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★★★★★★

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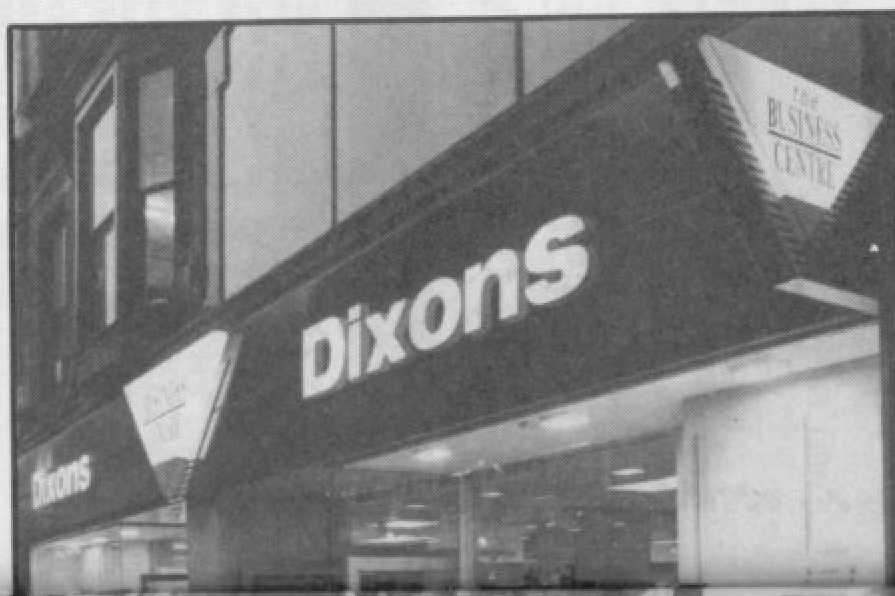


TRUE STORIES

BUT SOME ARE SLIGHTLY MORE TRUE THAN OTHERS **PRICE: £8.70**

CHRISTMAS SPREE FOR SPECCY SALES!

By our 'death announcements very premature' Correspondent



Though the wise reader will take all figures and claims from retailers with a bathtub load of salt the Spectrum looks to have had a pretty good Christmas. Dixons – the electrical retailers probably responsible for shifting the most Sinclair product – were reporting hardly a single machine left for sale in any of its stores. Both +2 and +3 were near enough sold out.

Other large electrical retailers were telling similar stories – the Sinclair machines were top sellers in Comet; WH Smith, which decided not to take the machines over Christmas, ought to be kicking itself.

The reports of a good Christmas will cause several software houses to think again over their Spectrum plans for

DON'T SEND DODGY TAPES TO US ANY MORE

By our 'phew we offloaded that lot then' Correspondent

We've decided to cut out the middle man (well men and girl actually) in the Tape Returns process by putting you in direct contact with the mighty organisation that actually duplicates them. So if any megatape should fail to load follow the following procedure:

1 Fiddle with the volume and tone controls on your tape recorder

2 Check the tape recorder to computer connecting lead is working (a surprisingly common problem this)

3 Unplug ALL devices from the back

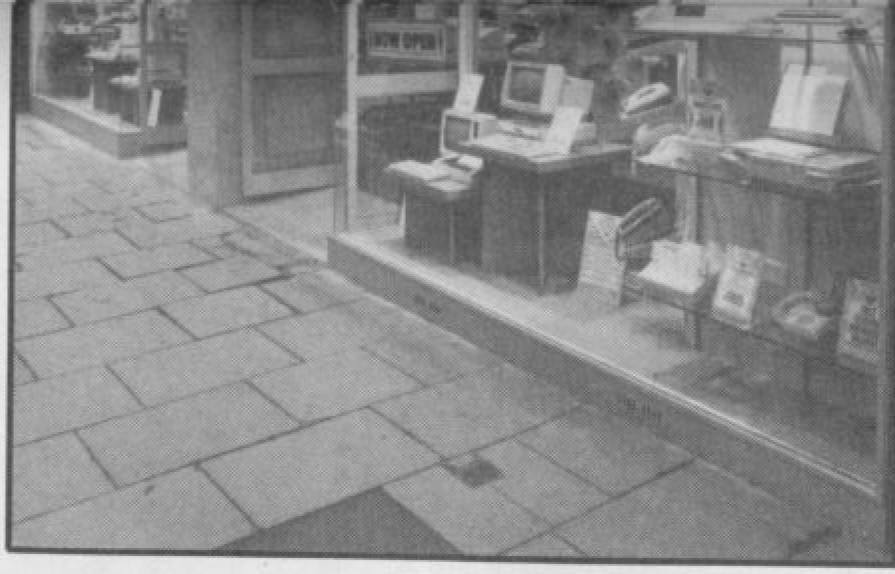
The Kamikaze Bear Headlines

Yoh, as I believe the Bear is wont to say. Dr Stockhausen here. Bert Stockhausen, psychiatrist and electrician to the stars. I have sad news for all you faithful readers who enjoy catching up with the Bear's violent and sadistic adventures. The poor little ursine is currently under heavy sedation at the Stockhausen Institute for the Very, Very Nervous.

It was only a matter of time; after his experiences in 'Nam (not VietNam, as he would have you believe, but Chelte'Nam) the Bear's childhood traumas began to

on 16-bit games at the expense of 8-bit in general, and Spectrum in particular. However, the Spectrum user base is now so massive software houses would be foolish to ignore it entirely. 1989 should see a streamlined release schedule with only top quality material, licences and budget material appearing. This should mean an overall improvement in Spectrum products.

There may be one other effect of the Spectrum's continuing success – a price cut +2 has long been predicted by the industry but continuing success at Christmas may postpone this. Anyway Amstrad has a long history of completely ignoring industry predictions . . . (though we heard this good rumour about what's supposed to happen in March . . .)



48K mode
4 If possible test the loading of the game on another Spectrum
5 OK If you've got this far, we admit defeat, send the game back to the following address:
MEGATAPE (insert number)
RETURNS
SPOOL
FIRST AVENUE
DEESIDE IND PARK
CLWYD CH5 2NU

We'll try to get you a brand new tape as soon as possible but give us a couple of weeks please!

NB On occasion the address to send a particular month's megatape may change – if so we'll let you know by printing the correct address on the Megatape pages of the magazine.

Bear's childhood traumas began to resurface; his early experiences as a cuddly toy in a nursery for sick children began to interphase synchronistically with his training in silent killing and explosives.

The result was a complete neurological fugue. The Bear, once the most fiercesome fighting machine this side of Hanoi, is now a burbling mass of complexes. He throws his food across the ward (where it bounces off the rubber walls), he bursts into tears when he sees pretty flowers or fluffy bunny rabbits, he writes poems and sings little songs accompanying himself on the ukelele. It was an extremely messy breakdown – he was eating egg mayonnaise sandwiches at the time.

So what triggered this collapse? Simply the continuous barrage of threats and insults from you, the readers. A sensitive soul at heart, the Bear could not come to terms with the thought that hundreds – if not thousands – of you wanted to kick the stuffing out of him. It's what we electricians – sorry, psychiatrists – call the "fastest gun" syndrome. Constantly under pressure to prove his bearhood, he could never relax and pursue his favourite hobby, knitting bootees for babies.

If you want the Bear to get better and return to the pages of SU, there's only one way to help him regain his health; write at once telling him how much you love him and want to see his fluffy face again.

Write to SAVE THE BEAR, Sinclair User, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU. Make it quick, or next month we'll begin the adventures of Kamikaze Fish (armed to the gills).

MOONWALKER

MICHAEL JACKSON JOINS US GOLD!

By our slightly amazed Correspondent



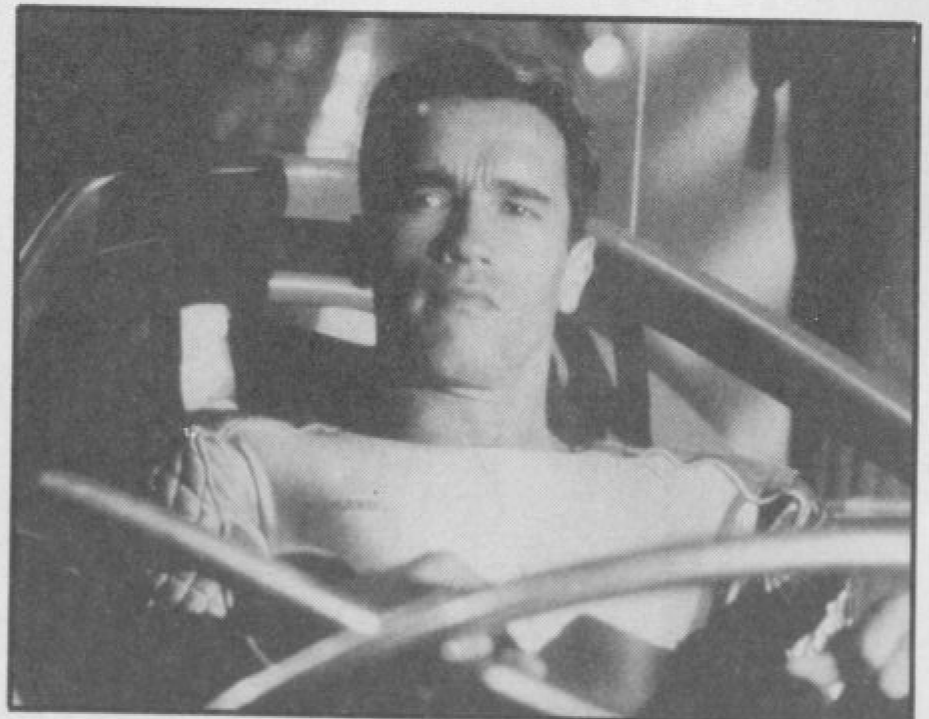
Michael Jackson mega Pop Star, legend and experiment in plastic surgery is to feature in a US Gold game. The game will be based on Michael's recent film Moonwalker (considered by the SU staff as completely dire except for the music and dancing but what do we know?)

Moonwalker features Michael Jackson saving the world from an extreme baddie called MR BIG (MR BIG is so hard his name has to be written in capitals all over the press release). Michael turns into a robot, whizzes about as a futuristic car and generally dances his way to victory. It could be a very very bizarre game indeed but then they said that about the Frankie Goes to Hollywood game which was actually brilliant (though not very successful). So we'll just keep quiet until we see it.

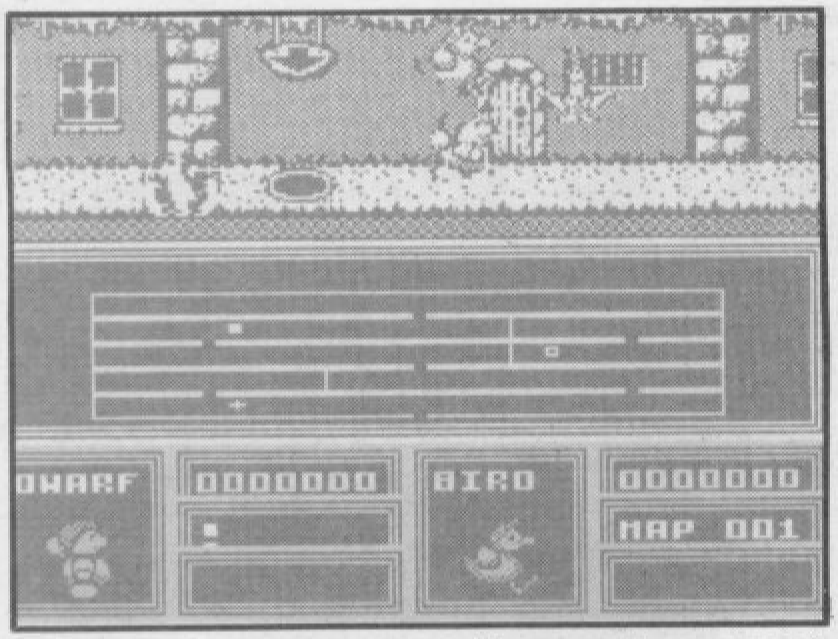
ARNOLD GOES TO GRAND SLAM

By our 'I'm not just a beefcake' Correspondent

Grand Slam has grabbed one of the bigger film tie-ins this spring with The Running Man – the recent futuristic thriller starring Arnold Schwarzenegger. The film depicts a future in which criminals get to win a chance for freedom by taking part in a deadly game show. Arnie plays Ben Richards – unjustly convicted for a crime he did not commit and now the Gameshow's next victim. Sounds like a more plausible subject for a licence than the US Gold Moonwalker deal. No information about the game as yet but SU's psychic powers can exclusively reveal two facts: a) it won't be an adventure game; b) it will have a joystick option. (Mystical eh?)



DYNAMIC DUO



I treasure the memory of one episode of New Faces when Tony Hatch wanted to give some poor clod nought out of ten for star quality. Come on, said the compere, everyone's got to have some star quality, you can't give him nought. You're wrong, said Scarface Hatch; this man (an inept Tommy Cooper-style comedy magician) will never, ever make it in a million years. And he was right.

I feel the same way about **Dynamic Duo**. While it's got a couple of good ideas, the whole affair has been so shabbily cobbled together all you're left with is an incomprehensible frenzy of moving things and split screens.

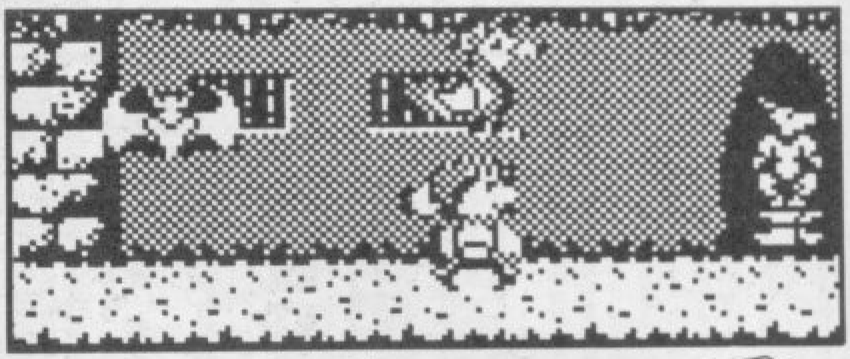
Cutesy animal games have always made me faint with indifference; the only exception was **Head Over Heels**, which was very clever and nicely programmed. **Dynamic Duo** pinches the same idea, but isn't.

You control two supposedly lovely-wovely creatures, a dwarf and a duck, described in the instructions as a "winged bird", presumably as opposed to a finned bird. Your aim is to explore the Night House, a scary castle, searching for the ten keys hidden in treasure chests. When combined, the ten keys admit you to the Calculation Room, which hides the secret of the destruction of the Dark Powers.

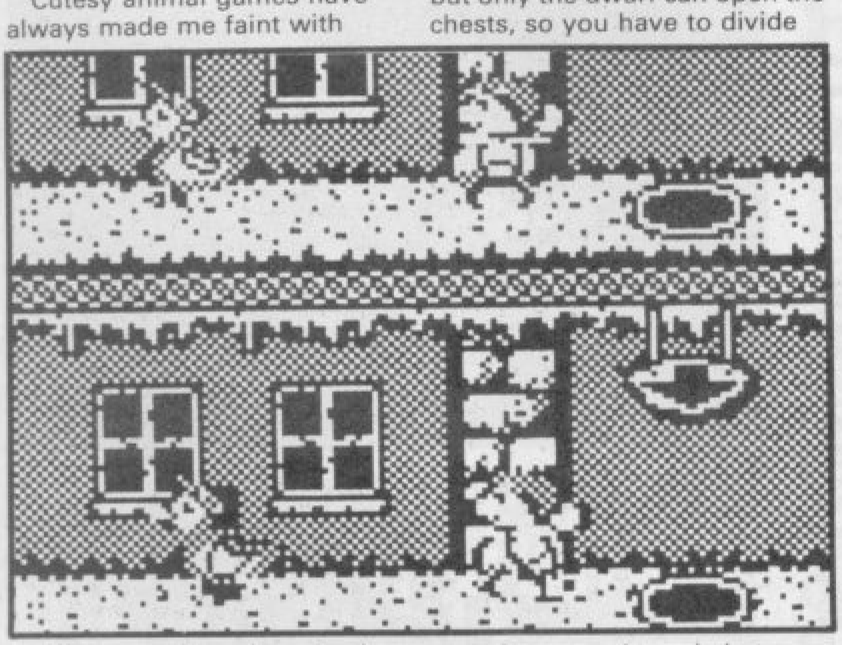
The design and animation of the main characters is dire, and to make matters worse, the action takes place in a thin strip in the top third of the screen. This doesn't allow much space for exciting background designs or interesting baddies.

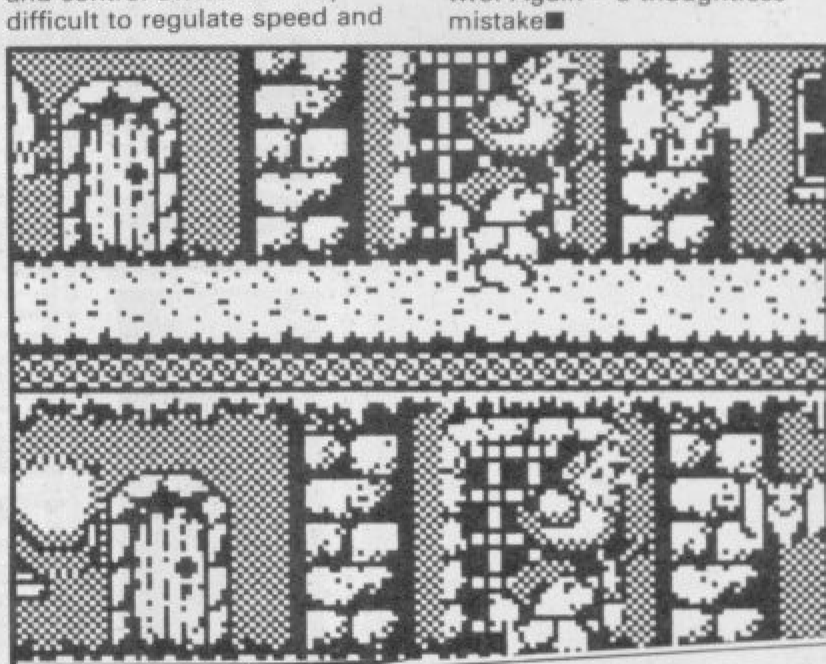
Just to double the dullness, the two characters can split up and explore separate areas of the map. The duck can fly faster, but only the dwarf can open the chests, so you have to divide your forces and toggle between controlling one and the other to complete the game. When the two are together, they can drop through trapdoors onto lower levels by using the Down control. They can also move upwards through doors by using – yes, you guessed it – the Down control again. Mental. The trouble is that once you've separated, it's almost impossible to get the two to combine again so that you can pass through the trapdoors. Mental again.

At the end of each level is a barrier which can be destroyed by pushing a boulder into it, and zapping it until it explodes. Each creature has a limited number of zaps, shown in the score panel in the bottom third of the screen. What two lovely-wovely fluffy animals are doing with high-energy weapons is not adequately explained.



Sound effects are minimal, and control awful. It's very difficult to regulate speed and direction with a joystick, and you can't redefine and control keys, which are ridiculous; 1, Q, CAPS SHIFT and Z for player 1, and Y, L, ENTER, P for player two. Again – a thoughtless mistake■





GAMES REVIEW!

FAX BOX

ARCADE REVIEW

DYNAMIC DUO *Label:* ***Firebird*** *Author:* ***Probe*** *Price:* ***£8.95*** *Memory:* ***48K/128K*** *Joystick:* ***various***

GRAPHICS	SOUND
55	40
24	20
PLAYABILITY	LAST ABILITY

Awful cutesy mess with low playability. Avoid

Reviewer: Chris Jenkins

OVERALL **36**

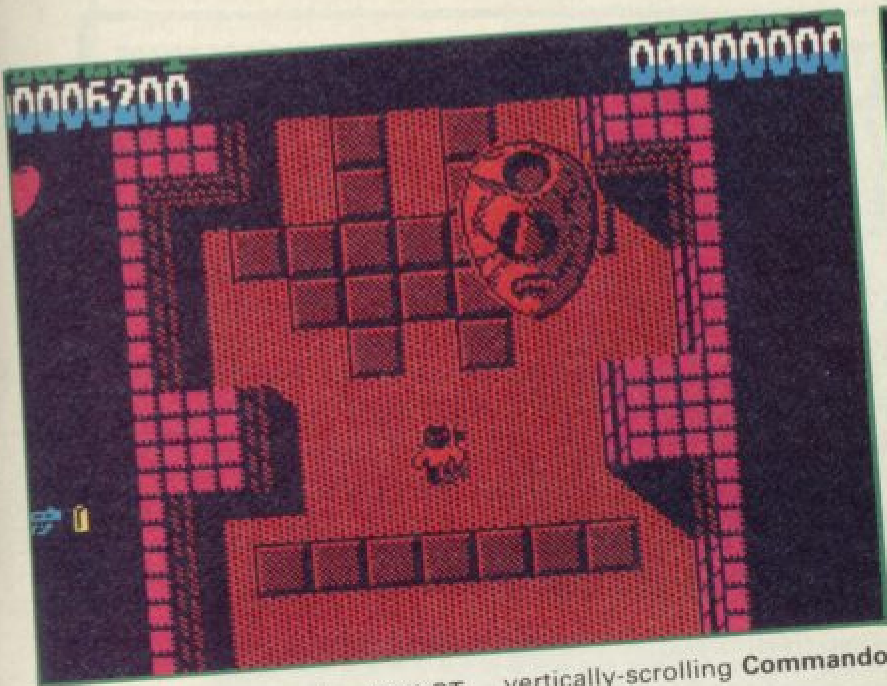
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GAMES REVIEW!



When I saw the Atari ST version of **Victory Road**, I thought "UUURRGH! Dogfood!", which was quite fair considering that the ST is supposed to be a super-dooper sixteen-bit wonder-machine and **Victory Road** looked and played dead awful.

VICTORY ROAD

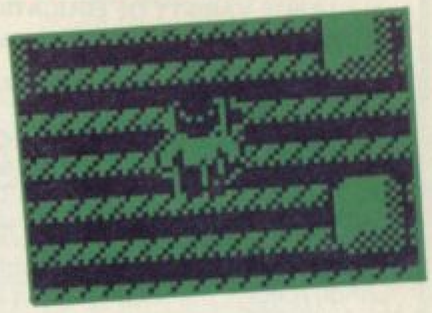


You can imagine then how enthusiastic I was about the prospect of reviewing the Spectrum version. As I loaded it (copyright T. Dillon Reviews Inc) my horrible suspicions were confirmed; it looked terrible. Small sprites, very average animation, and uninteresting backgrounds. I began to play the game. Imagine my shock to find that as a game it was ACTUALLY QUITE GOOD and ENJOYABLE.

Victory Road is the sequel to the coin-op **Ikari Warriors**, and has the same general format – a vertically-scrolling **Commando**-style.

But this time it's a sci-fi rather than a warzone scenario. It also has the same two-player option; if you like you can select dual players, using a wide range of control options. This makes it easier to clear the baddies from the screen, but if one player lags behind, the screen stops scrolling until he catches up. Your partner cannot be harmed by your bullets, but he can be blown up by your grenades, so watch out (unless you're feeling particularly mean). 128K sound effects are impressively psychedelic.

On the subject of weapons, you start off with an automatic rifle, and grenades which fly forth if you hold down the fire button. As you make your way along the causeways and obstacles, you find flashing bonus squares which represent new weapons; a laser, temporary shield, and a marvellous automatic grenade launcher thingy which blasts huge craters in the landscape ahead of you.



A toggle control lets you choose the firing mode; either straight ahead of you or at an angle. And what a selection of creepies you have to shoot! Well, it's not much of a selection akchooloy; little zombie soldiers, fluttering butterfly thingies, hopping froggoids and strange twisty thingies which follow you around the screen. At the end of each level you enter a warp square and are transported to an arena where you take on a giant floating head. This isn't difficult to dodge, but takes a lot of hits to knock out, and it ejects zombie soldiers all the time. Blow the head away and you're back to the main road.

So surprisingly enough, though the initial impression is poor, there's plenty of slam-bang action and enough megaviolence to keep you happy until the next coin-op conversion comes along■

ARCADE REVIEW — FAX BOX

VICTORY ROAD** Label: **Ocean** Author: **In-house** Price: **£8.95** Memory: **48K/128K
*Joystick: **Various***

GRAPHICS	SOUND
54	72
78	76
PLAYABILITY	LAST ABILITY

Initially disappointing but eventually enjoyable coin-op conv

Reviewer: [signature]

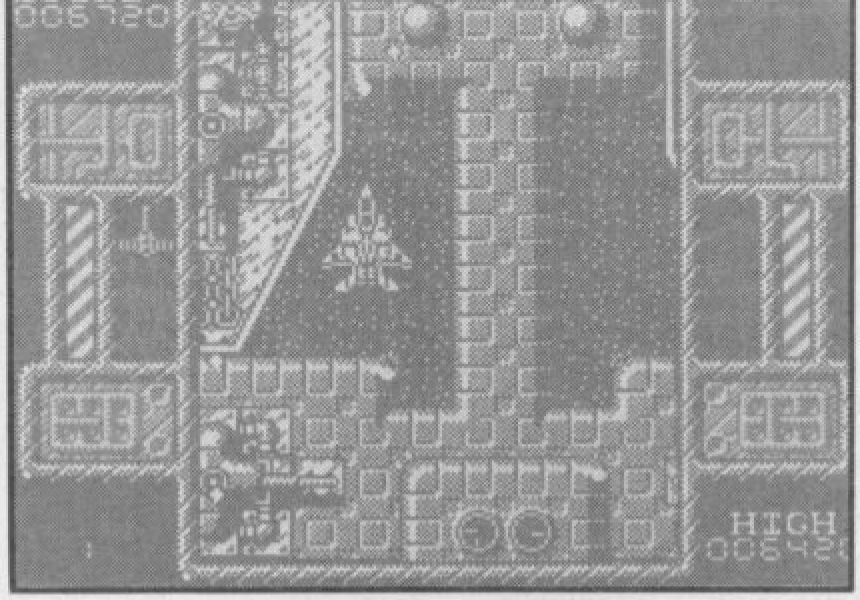
OVERALL **74**

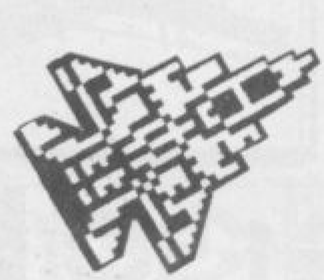
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GAMES REVIEW

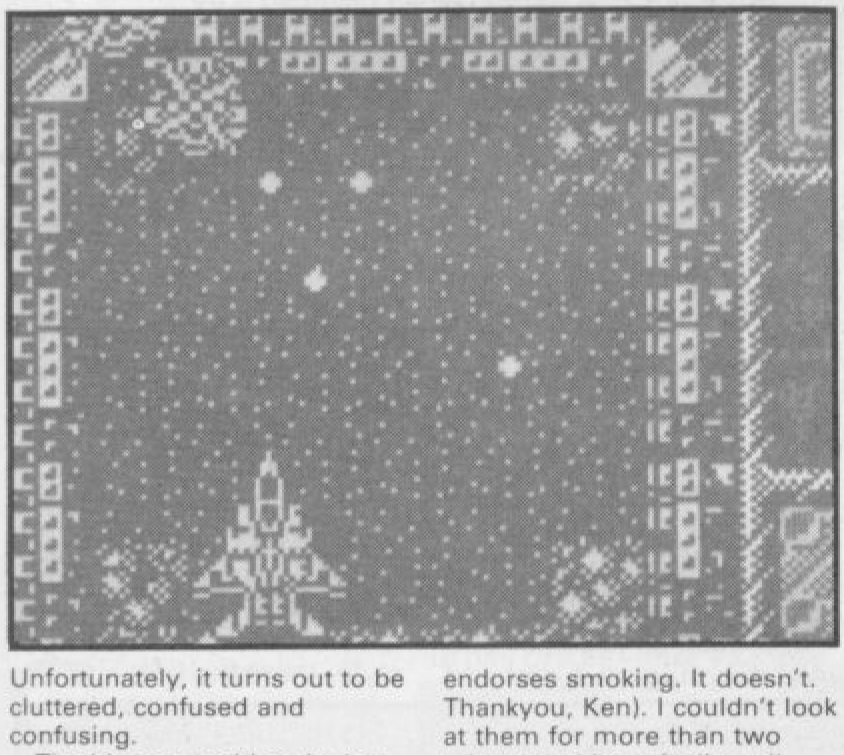
I know you're supposed to have reasonable eyesight to fly one of those American superfighters, but Players' **Tomcat** seems to require nothing short of E.S.P. of its pilots. I'll tell you why, shall I? Yes I shall. It's because you can't see what's shooting at you, you can't see what you're shooting at, you can't see where the hell you are and you can't see where you're going. It's like Beirut with fog.

First appearances imply that **Tomcat** is a rather special vertical shoot-out. While very much in the **Flying Shark/ Xenon** mould, **Tomcat** has more complicated graphics and more going on. Well, that's what it seems like.





TOMCAT



Unfortunately, it turns out to be cluttered, confused and confusing.

The biggest problem is that you simply can't see what is going on. "Game Over" pops up for no evident reason. Especially observant spectators were sometimes able to point out the direction from whence the incoming bullet originated, but I was continually dumbfounded as to what was shooting me down.

The reason for this feeling of myopic paranoia is that the amount of things on the screen which are FILLED IN is virtually equal to the number of things which AREN'T, so it's like looking at one of those Embassy fag adverts which you couldn't possibly make out unless you were 100m away. While they were very clever adverts (This remark in no way implies that **Sinclair User** endorses smoking. It doesn't. Thankyou, Ken). I couldn't look at them for more than two minutes without feeling all giddy. (This remark in no way implies that **Sinclair User** endorses spinning ground until you feel giddy or using other hallucinatory aids like roundabouts – It doesn't. Thanks again, Ken)

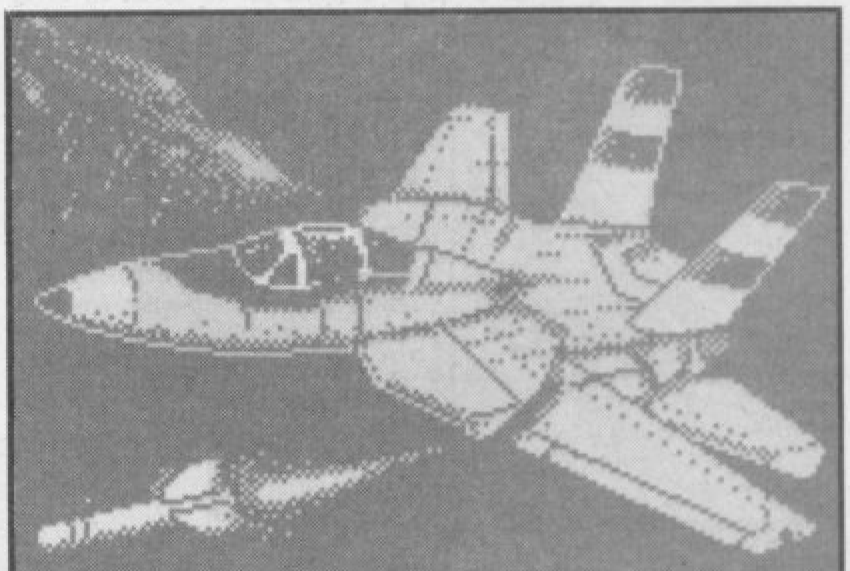
So, what of the playability? Well, it certainly isn't the fastest game I've seen.

The screen scrolls four ways and your task is the standard one of blowing up gun emplacements and shooting down enemy fighters. You can collect extra weapons in the now rather tired fashion of flying over the tokens.

The bad guys fly in quite uninspiring patterns, but the bullets – THE BULLETS! God knows where they come from. I can't see them! Even when I've got backward firing missiles and tri-directional machine guns – which don't always fire – I was getting shot all over the place by mystery aliens with mystery invisible bullets.

On and on this thing goes, killing you with infuriatingly little explanation, and no hint of further excitement.

It's a pity that what could easily have been a very polished and entertaining budget game is horribly let down by poor presentation and slow action. Tsk Tsk■



ARCADE REVIEW

FAX BOX

TOMCAT *Label:* **Players** *Author:* **In-house** *Joystick:* **Various** *Price:* **£2.99** *Memory:* **48K/128K**

GRAPHICS	SOUND
50	60
30	40
PLAYABILITY	LAST ABILITY

Poor Xenon clone. Slower, cheaper, poorer.

Reviewer: Jim Douglas

OVERALL **46**

1

FIST +

Eeeeerrrgh, gerrrrrrrk, higaaaaaah! Yes, it's time for some of that ol' martial arts magic again. It seems in the world of computer software there is no such thing as too many Martial Arts games. Latest is Fist + which has you pitched against not one but two deadly ninja assassins! Hours of ninja bashing fun for everyone! Chaaaaaack!

Well the regular folks who don't read Sinclair User will have to pay a reasonable but conventional £7.99 for the game whereas you lucky sons (and daughters) of guns (are you sure about this? – GT) can buy it for a mere £6.49. That's a fat £1.50 off! Owwwwwwah!

You probably know the drill by now; make out a check for £6.49 made payable to Firebird Software and send it off to the address on the coupon. Please allow 28 days for delivery. Yah! (can you send those ninjas back to the agency now please Jim – GT).



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Beroom! We'll keep this coupon brief since it speaks for itself.

Driving games are marvellous fun.

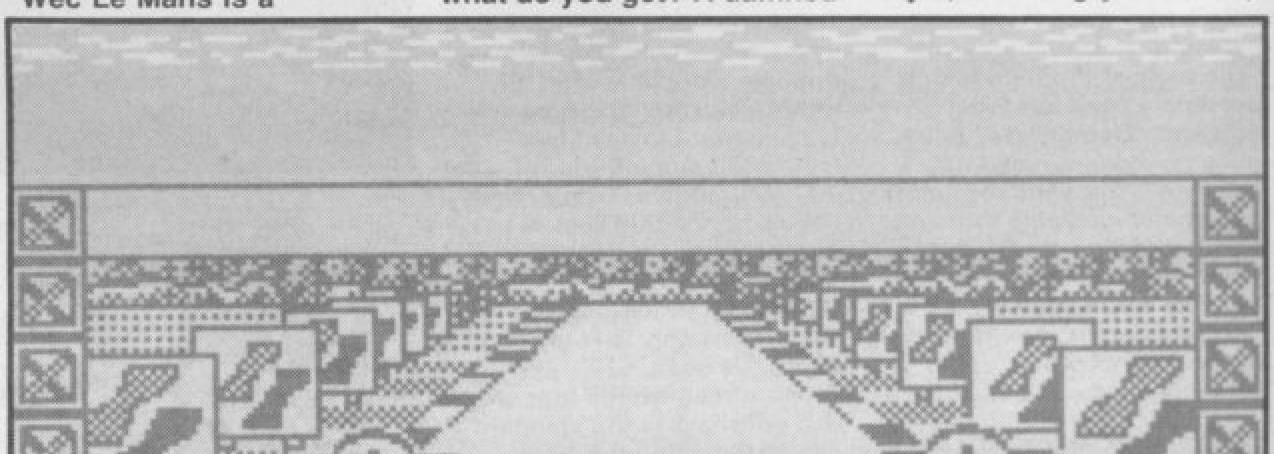
Wec Le Mans is a marvellous driving game.

£1.50 is a marvellous discount.

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Add them all together and what do you get? A damned fine affair. (?)

(That's enough of the "Blinkin' Obvious" prose style, thanking you – G.T.)

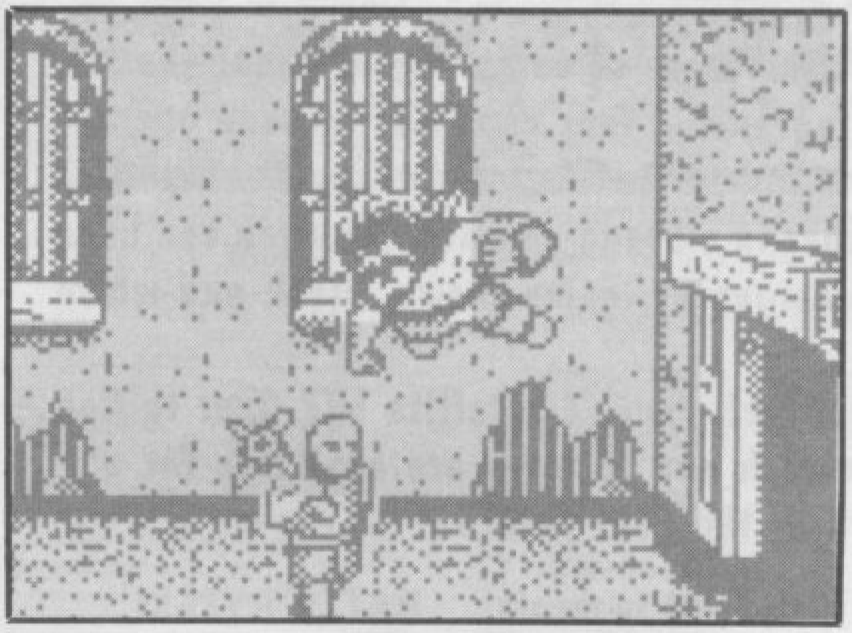


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TIGER ROAD



Take THAT, Nigel Lawson! Who says you can inflict outrageous tax poll mortgate law fine car clamp currency worries on our komputer kids? Not SU. That's for sure. Down with the "Government"! Burn the back benches!

Phew. That's enough rebellion. But it's enough to get your gander fair "up" these days, what with the price of games soaring towards the heavens every month. Let us take an example only too common in these days of soaring prices and plummeting salaries.

Little Jimmy dearly wants a copy of US Gold's shining example of martial arts destruction, *Tiger Road*. Now, does our so called caring society leap to the aid of this underprivileged and therefore very deserving reader? Like bottoms it does. He still can't get a copy of TR for less than £8.99.

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He gets his mum to cut out the coupon here (with a pair of round-edged scissors) and sends it off to USG who will immediately send him a copy of the game – reviewed in SU83 – for £1.50 less.

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3

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GIANTS! They're huge! They're here! They're GIANTS! US Gold, the people behind outrageously violent spectacles such as *Streetfighter* and *Human Killing Machine* in their all-knowing wisdom have just released a compilation bursting with amazing super hits like *Gauntlet II*, *California Games*, *Rolling Thunder*, *720°* and even *OUTRUN*. Amazing but true.

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And the best part of the deal is that while other "people" have to pay the huge – but very reasonable considering the quality – price of £12.99, fantastic readers of the fantastic Sinclair User will only have to pay £10.99 – that's £2 less than £12.99 if you're especially stupid.

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But what are the real facts behind satellite TV? Over to Ron Money, whose satellite dish and receiver are available for a couple of hundred quid in the near future.

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But what sort of service can you, as a computer user, expect from satellite TV? We speculate fearlessly on the sort of computer coverage we can look forward to, if 'look forward' is quite the right words . . .

BATTY BYTES!

Presented by *Craig Charles* and *Paula Yates, BATTY BYTES!* is a computer show with a difference! No boring old technical terms like, er, "computer" — this is a fast-moving show with lots of fun special guests, competitions, videos, strange camera angles, phone-ins and ineptitude.

In the first program, *RICK ASTLEY* talks about his Plus Three, and how he took it with him on his world tour and found out that the plug didn't fit in Japan! There's a *BANANARAMA* video in which you can just see a Spectrum in a cardboard box on the top of a wardrobe in a house just up the street from where Karen's mum lives, and the girls tell us how they really want to be taken seriously!

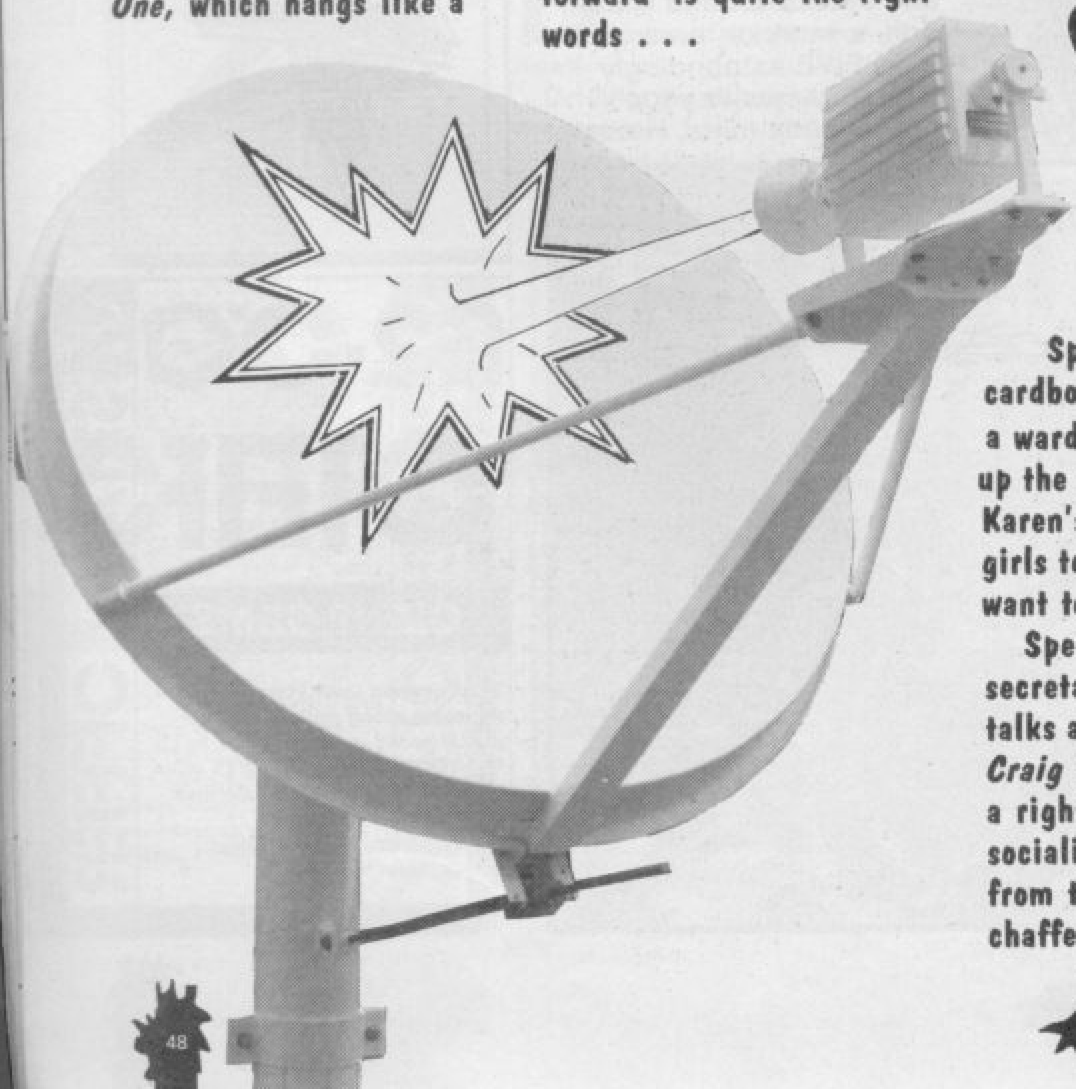
Special guest, health secretary *Kenneth Clarke,* talks about his modem, and *Craig Charles* tells us what a right-on alternative socialist comedian he is, from the back of his chaffeur-driven Bentley!

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- A round-up of modems presented by someone who knows all about modems;
- *Lesley Judd* looking all confused and saying "and what exactly does that mean in layman's terms, Fred?"
- *Fred Harris* showing you how to make your Spectrum control the temperature in your greenhouse while operating your model railway, helping the disabled (the man who knows about modems), picking up pictures from weather satellites (courtesy of WEATHERTEL, the 24-hour weather service beamed directly to





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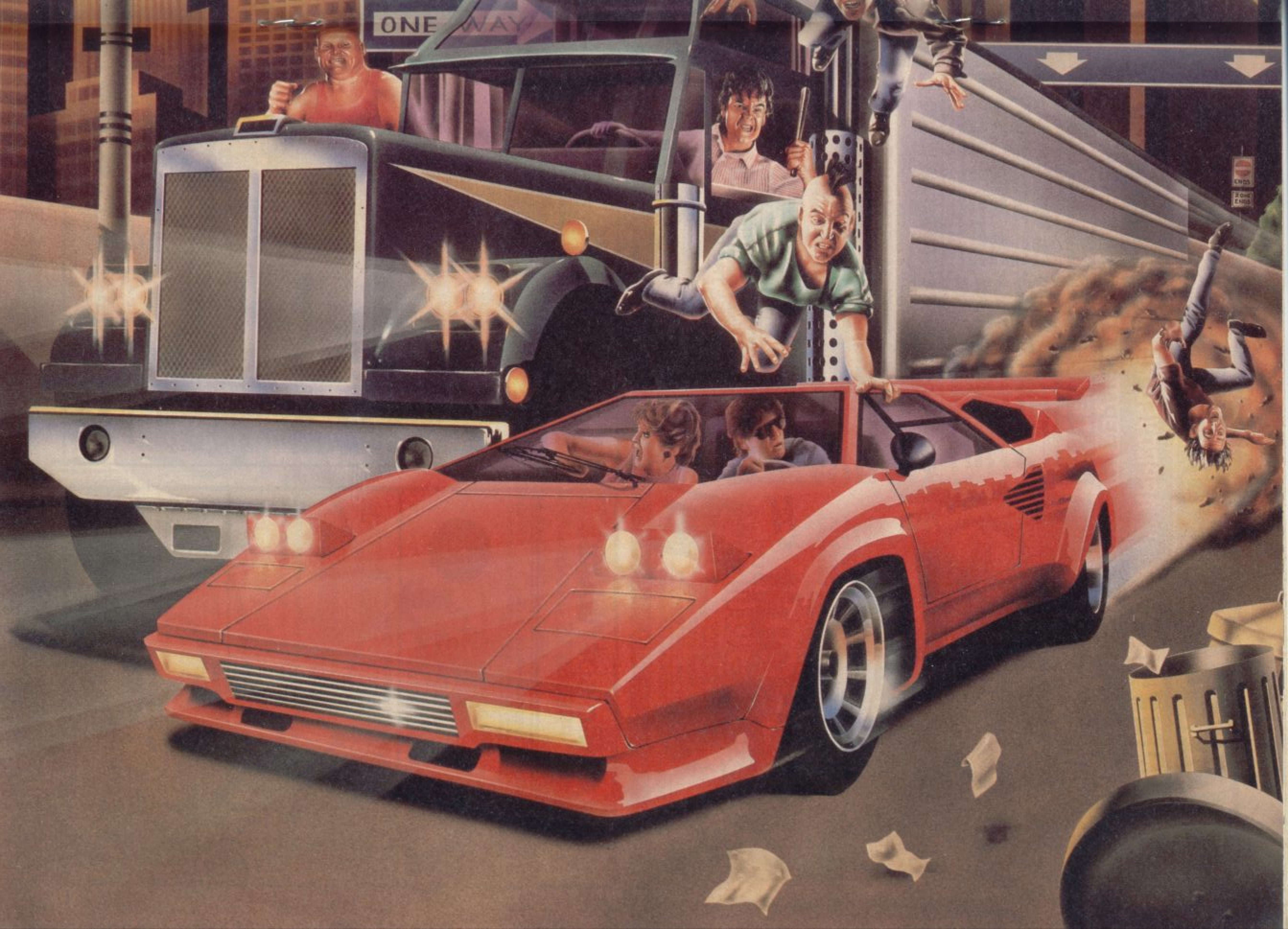
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A quiz show all about the wild and whacky world of business computing, hosted by *Jim Bowen* and featuring celebrities from the world of chartered accountancy, computer-aided design and industrial control systems. Super, smashing. How many of these simple questions could YOU answer . . .

- Does the dynamic file allocation technique used by MS/DOS allow files to be distributed in non-contiguous regions of a disk? Or not?
- Is the cache controller of the Dell System 310 an 82358 or a 80386?
- Can data stored in a freeform text retrieval database and not normalised into relational tables be queried and manipulated by a language based on relational algebra? Come on, hurry up!

ART, SOCIETY AND THE COMPUTER

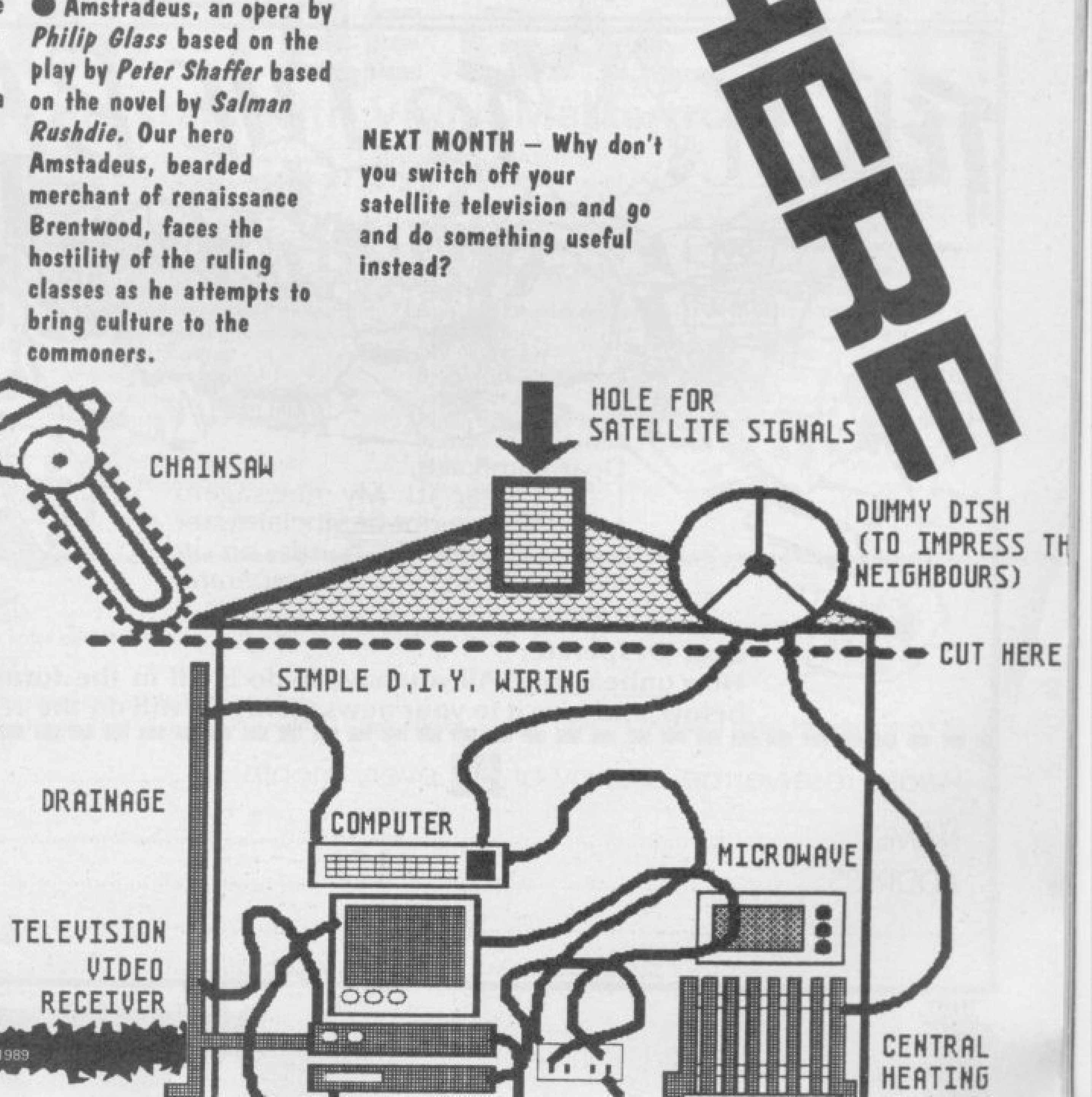
Dedicated to quality broadcasting, satellite TV will bring you the greatest performances of artistic companies from all over Europe. Highlights include:

- *Mikhail Baryshnikov* and the *Moscow Corps de Ballet* explaining who their Spectrum is used to record dance steps – and to keep track of their tights.
- *Melvyn Bragg's* look at the significance of computers in the novels of *G. K. Chesterton,* with narration by *Simon Callow* and *Laurence Olivier.*
- Computers as sculpture, presented by the curators of the Tate Gallery, who recently paid £11,500 for a second-hand ZX81 covered in Dulux.
- Amstradeus, an opera by *Philip Glass* based on the play by *Peter Shaffer* based on the novel by *Salman Rushdie.* Our hero Amstadeus, bearded merchant of renaissance Brentwood, faces the hostility of the ruling classes as he attempts to bring culture to the commoners.

LITE TV IS HERE



NEXT MONTH – Why don't you switch off your satellite television and go and do something useful instead?





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Xenon (last month's cover game) was so astoundingly amazing we felt that we had to celebrate some more.

One of our lucky winners will win this spanking gleaming shining array of inter-galactic hardware:

SHADOWBAT –

The mysterious triangular battle cruiser with full retractible guns.
Attack and flight modes!
Carries 3 other Shadowcraft!
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Fully working cockpit/cannons/cargo ramp etc.

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One for each wing of the Shadowbat.
Each with its own pilot!
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And a further ten entrants will each receive copies of the game Xenon.

On the coupon at the bottom of the page, write the answers to the following questions:

1) The first satellite was named:
a) Vostok b) Sputnik c) Oswald
2) The innermost planet of our solar system is:
a) Derek b) Europa c) Mercury
3) The first man on the Moon was:
a) "Buzz" Aldrin b) "Chip" Stockhausen c) "Neil" Armstrong

And send it off to: "Storm the Rebel Base! Take No Prisoners!" Competition, Sinclair User, 14 Holkham Road, Peterborough PE2 0UF. Closing date 31st March

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1)

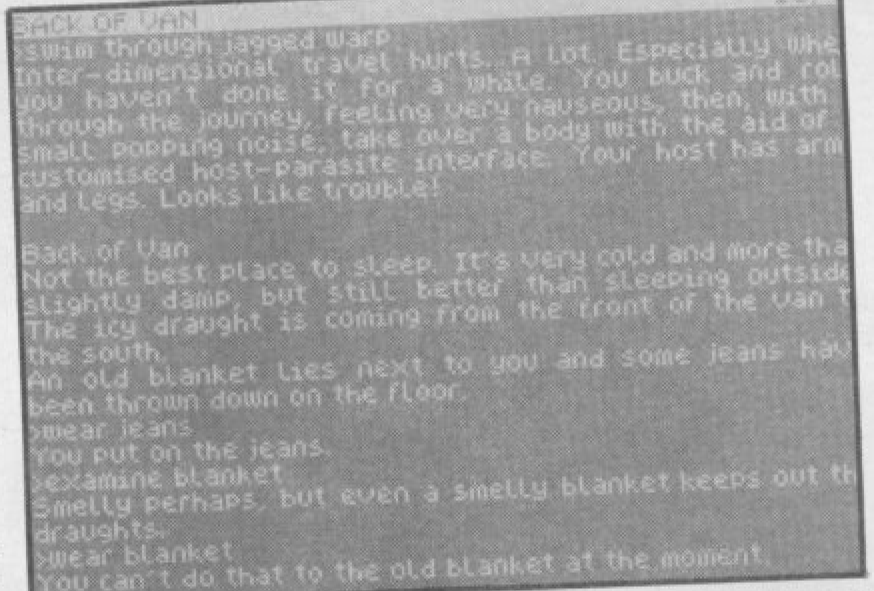
2)

3)



Fish

GAMES REVIEW



Honest to Cod, this plaice is getting on top of me. I've absolutely haddock with this adventuring – I think I'll skate off and show you all a clean pair of eels. After all, the world's my oyster and I could have a whale of a time.

Right! That's it! No more fish puns AT ALL. Not even a tiddler. Oops! we'll try to get this review out of the way without descending to Magnetic Scrolls' level of humour, which is painful at best, as you'll know if you've guffawed through previous epics such as **The Pawn, Guild of Thieves** or **Corruption**.

This latest adventure, like the previous efforts, is text only on the Spectrum – a pity, because, though the Scrollies try valiantly to deny it, graphics (particularly of the quality seen in the 16-bit versions of their games) do add a great deal to the atmosphere. The parser, though, is the main attraction of MS games; it's so intelligent that you'll get a sensible reply to almost anything you type in, not the usual "I can't do that".

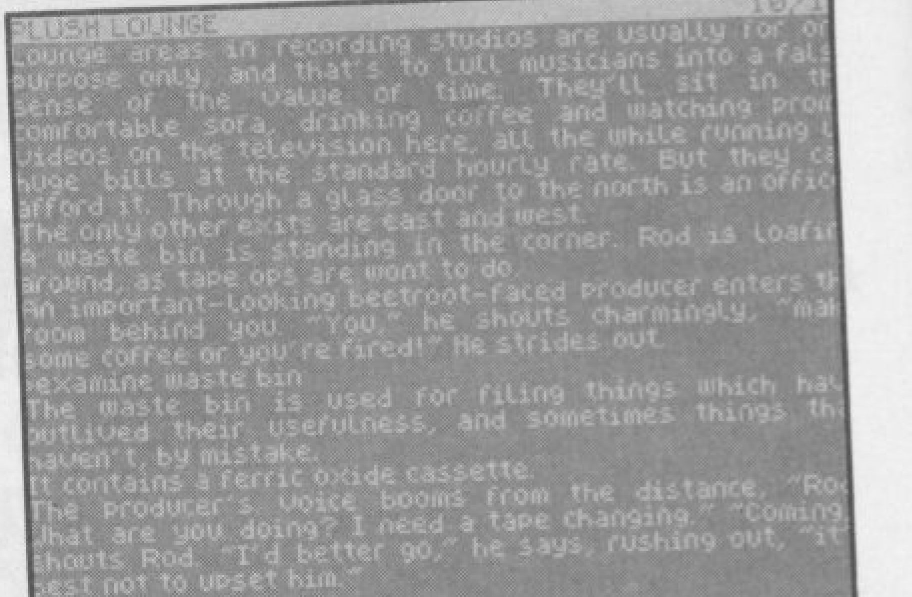
Your main aim in life is to defeat a bunch of renegade fish known as the Seven Deadly Fins (arf), who pop up in various guises in their bid to take over the universe, or something tacky like that. They've stolen a time-warp gizmo doofy and split it into three sections, you have to get it back. All dull enough so far. The gimmick is that there are three completely separate scenarios to complete, in each of which you occupy a different body.

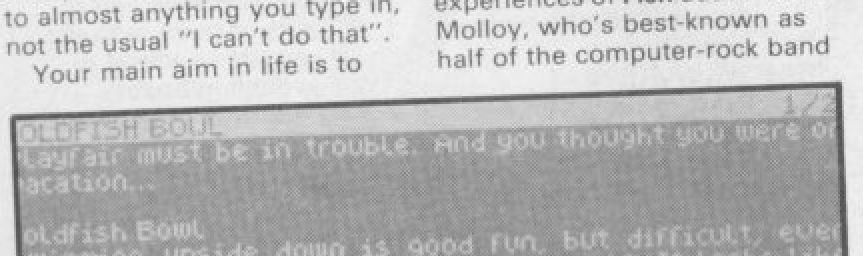
Swimming through the first time-space warp thingy transports you into a recording studio, where your first challenge is to make some coffee before you get the sack. The kitchen's locked, of course, so things aren't straightforward. I can't help feeling that some of this section might be based on the experiences of **Fish** author John Molloy, who's best-known as half of the computer-rock band Mainframe (RIP).

Assuming that you don't make the mistake of entering the studio in the middle of a recording session (instant dissolution), you proceed to the next adventure, which is set in the steaming Amazonian jungles, and the third which sees you in the back of a van in the middle of a disasterous rock group tour.

Like previous MS adventures, the screen layout of **Fish** is dead straightforward; at the top of the screen is shown the current location, score and number of moves made; the rest of the screen is full of text. Your text input can be edited in various clever ways (delete letter, word, or line, return to previous line and so on) and you can even change the text colours.

The gimmicks included with the package aren't quite up to the usual standards; a Hydropolis Underground Omnibus Travelcard, a Fish Recognition poster, and a manual/novella/hints book. As usual the hints are in coded form; type in the codes to get help on specific points.





If you like the cringemaking MS sense of humour, you'll probably enjoy **Fish**; but it seems to me that the plot doesn't hang together as well as previous offerings. Worth £16? You'd be shark raving made. (Fyak!)■

ARCADE REVIEW

FAX BOX

FISH *Label:* ***Rainbird*** *Author:* ***Magnetic Scrolls*** *Price:* ***£15.99*** *Memory:* ***128K disk only*** *Joystick:* ***none***

GRAPHICS	SOUND
N/A	N/A
79	85
PLAYABILITY	LAST ABILITY

Latest Magnetic Scrolls adventure looks a bit green around the gills

Reviewer: Chris Jenkins

OVERALL 80

10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90



SPITTING IMAGE

Do you ever get the feeling that there's nothing that isn't getting licensed as a computer game? If Domark can make a game out of a satirical comedy puppet series, what can we expect next? **John Ketley's Weather Game? Emmerdale Farm Arcade Adventure?**

At least **Spitting Image** manages to be fairly funny and fairly gamey at the same time, rather than sacrificing one to emphasise the other. In effect this is a martial arts-style combat game, in which the combatants are world leaders; Margaret Thatcher, Ronnie Reagan, the Pope, President Gorbachev, the Ayatollah and lovely old Pik Botha. In order to avert a world war, you must choose one as your hero, and control him or her as he (or she) takes on all the others. There's also a two-player option in which the format is the same but you don't get to save the world at the end.

The cartoon-style characters are nicely drawn and animated. Particularly clever are the little details which you hardly notice during the battles; the way Mrs Thatcher's wig slips loose, Ronnie's neck telescopes out and so on

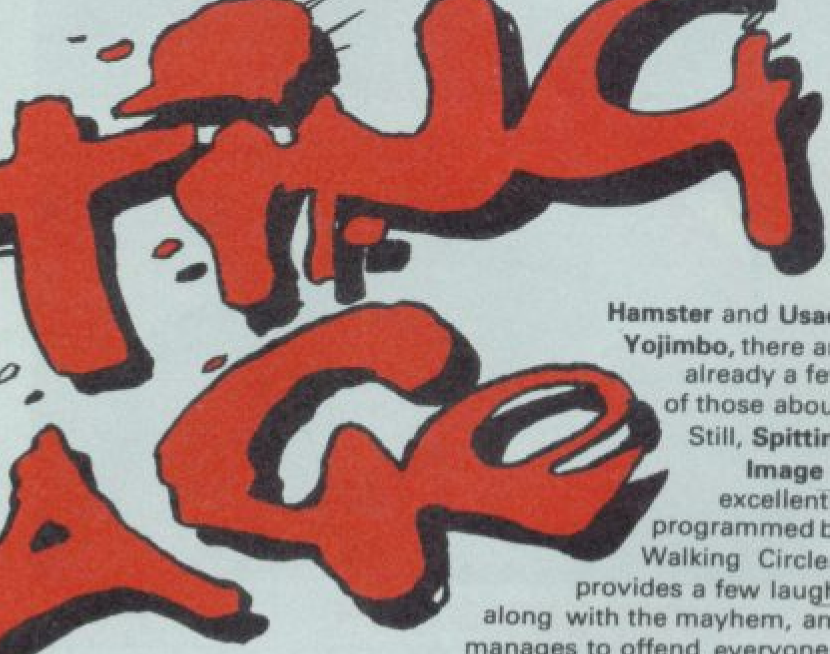
Once you've chosen your characters, the scene switches to the defending premier's home country; outside Number 10, on a South African rugby field and so on. The portraits of each character appear on each side of the screen, and there's the familiar energy bar to left and right. Now it's your job to punch, kick, butt, knee and jab your opponent into oblivion, just like in the U.N., in a best of five series.



Fighting moves are controlled by joystick or keyboard, and include hits to head, body and feet, and a special move which changes for each character – Botha, for instance, hits out with what looks like a yo-yo (!?!). You'll find, though, that you're constantly under attack from your opponent's little sidekick, who appears from the right hand side of the screen and bombards you with missiles. Apart from jumping out of the way, you can also hit back by pressing the space bar to summon your own sidekick into the fray, as many times as you like.

The sound effects are fine, and the music, a version of Phil Pope's theme tune of the series, is an excellent David Whittaker bash which, in the 128K version, will have you tapping your feet as you bash heads.

OK, the world doesn't actually need another martial arts game – not even a FUNNY martial arts game, because what with **Ninja Hamster** and **Usaqi Yojimbo**, there are already a few of those about. Still, **Spitting Image** is excellently programmed by Walking Circles, provides a few laughs along with the mayhem, and manages to offend everyone, so it can't be bad■



ARCADE REVIEW

FAX BOX

SPITTING IMAGE *Label:* ***Domark*** *Author:* ***Walking Circles*** *Price:* ***£9.95/£14.95*** *Memory:* ***48K/128K*** *Joystick:* ***Various***

GRAPHICS	SOUND
70	72
68	65
PLAYABILITY	LASTABILITY

Comedy martial arts game with the accent on satire

Reviewer:

OVERALL **70**

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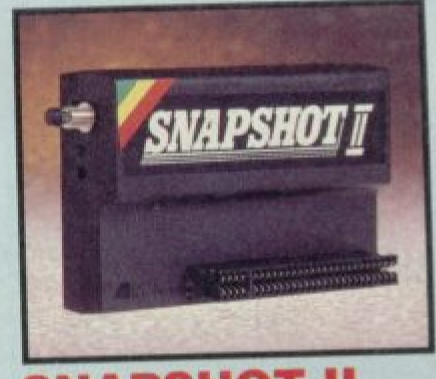
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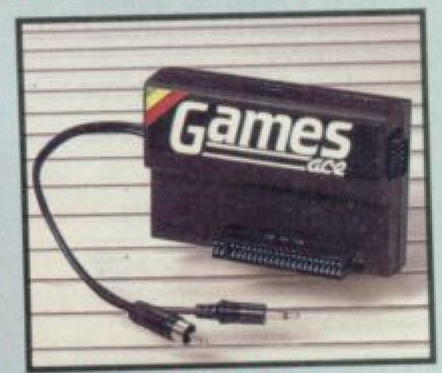
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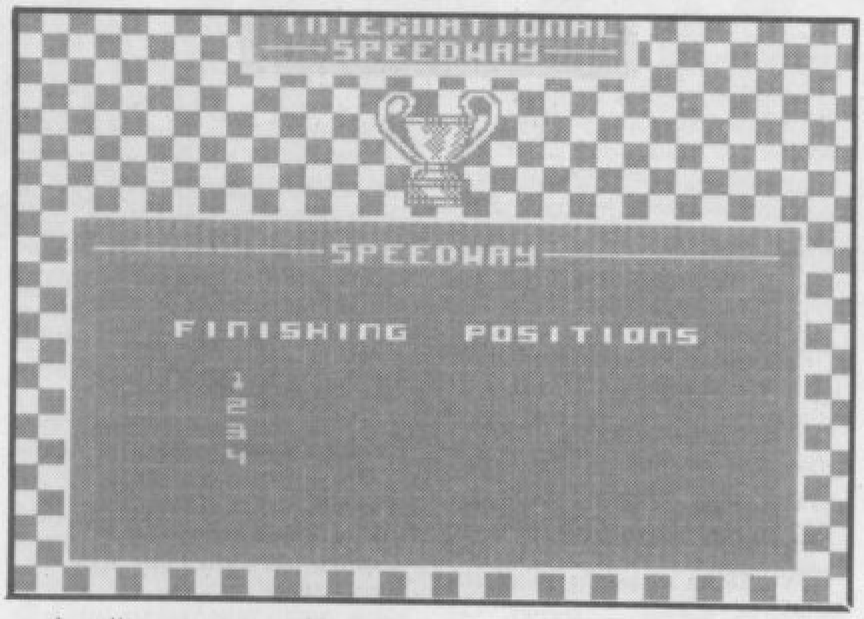


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INTERNATIONAL SPEEDWAY

What possible good can Probe do themselves by releasing a game of such shockingly low quality?

International Speedway captures the thrills and spills of a speed-meet as effectively as a Chinese take-away embodies eastern communist philosophy. **I.S.** is full of the really rather unacceptable things that people used to get away with (just) four years ago by putting them down to the "limitations of the machine". Pooh. This is downright shoddy.

The track is presented as a 3D perspective affair stretching off into the distance. Now, speedway aficionados will probably know what the special speedway track is shaped like. It's a squashed circle. And it never changes. The result is that while other 3D race games could maybe excuse themselves some graphic ineptitude by having a very interesting course to negotiate, **I.S.** can't afford itself such luxuries.

The graphics are very, very bad. How can I explain. They're really bad. Still, many a great game has lurked behind very poor graphics, although I can't quite call any to mind right now, so on with the race.

Having selected what you want to be called and what nationality you want to be, you are allocated a race position (the inside lane to begin, moving further out the better you do in the heats) and presented with the stop-go indicators so loved by the speedway fraternity. With a wail

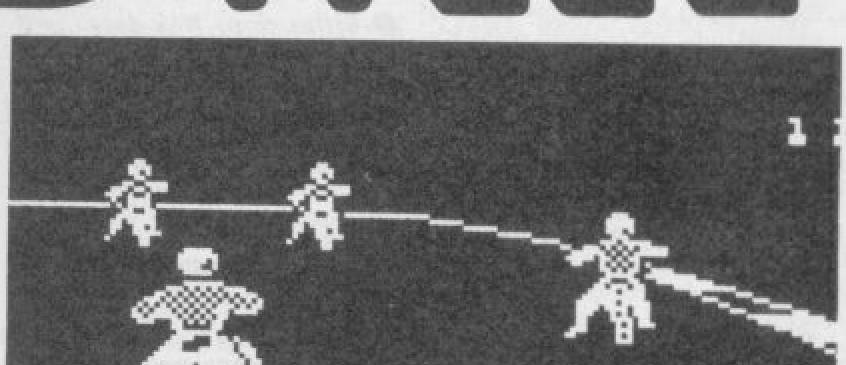


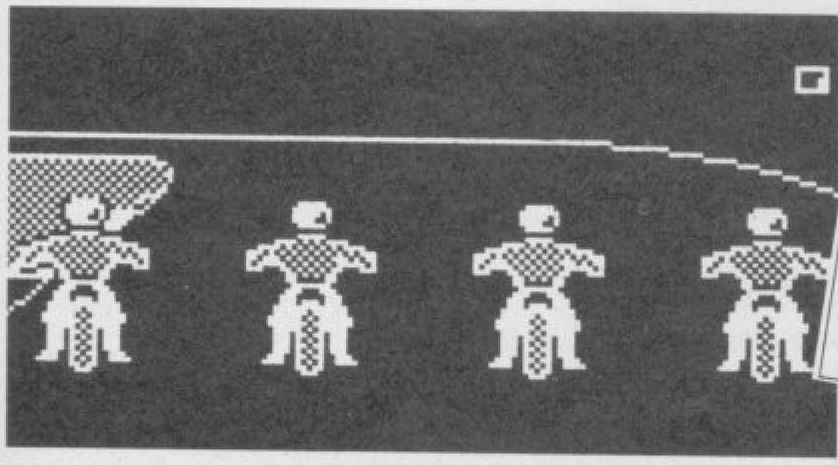
of engines revving (well, a whistle) the three lights go green (ready) green (steady) and green (GOOOOO!) and yerroff. Well, all the others seem to be off while you're left standing at the start. Here's a point that annoys me about these games, it seems impossible to keep up with the computer controlled bikes to begin with. They scream away and you can't catch them 'til the first bend.

Even the barging that goes on in the real thing isn't very well implemented. No matter how you attempt to knock off another player (kyak) or how unfairly they surprise you from behind (kyup) you always seem to come a cropper. Damned unfair.

So, what do we think of **International Speedway**? It's a lot of old tosh and you'd have to be mad to spend even 20p on it■







ARCADE REVIEW

FAX BOX

INTERNATIONAL SPEEDWAY *Label:* ***Firebird*** *Author:* ***Probe*** *Price:* ***£1.99*** *Memory:* ***48K/128K*** *Joystick:* ***Various***

GRAPHICS	SOUND	PLAYABILITY	LAST ABILITY
30	30	30	30

Dire speedway 'sim'. Very poor in every respect.

Reviewer: Jim Douglas

OVERALL **30**

IF you reckon we're talking rubbish don't just stand there . . .
Tell us what you think.
Stick your comments on paper, fill in and cut out the coupon below and send it in . . .



TONY

ROBOCOP

Robocop is too easy! In less than an hour I could get to the last level with all my lives plus a bonus life. As soon as you know when the bad guys are going to come it's a walk in the park and the playability has gone. But there's no way anyone can beat Dick Jones at the end of the last level. The playability and lastability you gave the game was both too high, they should be under 50%.

I just don't play it any more . . . no point!

David Leigh
Planet Earth
Putting his fiver towards: Rambo 3

● ***Foolish child! Other readers have written telling us that they've defeated Jones and finished the game, so there's no point saying it can't be done! Get back to your joystick and don't come whingeing to us until you've finished it!***

VINDICATOR

Hey you, Tony Dillon, what's your game then? Reviewing games with a very big hangover, or just being a wally. I was reading September SU and I saw your review of the **Vindicator**. Do you think 62 is enough? Well, I don't. It deserves at least a 90. When you went on holiday, did you leave what little brains you have in a bar or something. I don't think you would know a good game if it hit you on the head. Tony Dillon is nutty as nutty as a fruitcake, in fact. He can't even review a game right. So why don't you take some advice from me and SACK HIM!

Dominic Allott
Hull
Putting his fiver towards: R-Type

● ***Dillon says: I don't review games with hangovers because I don't get hangovers. I'm blind drunk all the time. By the way kids, drinking is for Mr Wino, remember.***

MAD MIX – THE PEPSI CHALLENGE

Shall I get straight to the point? Yes? O.K..... WHAT THE SMEG ARE YOU PLAYING AT? You gave **Mad Mix, The Pepsi Challenge**, a meagre 74! It deserved at least 95 as an overall score! GT, you shoot Dillon for this mistake and then give him the sack! (Only jokin', don't worry Dillon!) Anybody else who's readin' this out there, stop readin' an' buy **Mad Mix** now! Aside from that cock-up of Dillon's the mag and the mega-tapes are incredibly brill!

PS You must print this letter so Dillon's wrongs can be put right.
PPS Please print it, whimper, cringe, crawl, beg, please please, PLEASE!

Noel Byrne
Coventry
Putting his fiver towards: Afterburner

● ***Dillon says: Why does everyone want to shoot me this month. As for my wrongs, you right them, and I'll rearrange your face.***

FOOTBALL MANAGER 2

Greetings! I've been getting your mega cool mag for three months and it is great except for the review of **Football Manager 2.** 94%? 4% more than **Operation Wolf.** It deserves about 19%. Graphics are even worse than **Space Invaders.**

I would give **FM2** 7% for graphics, 2% for sound, 12% for playability and 8% for lastability. Also **Bear a Grudge** is awful. Please, (grovel) don't put it on a megatape again, (grovel) or I'll get my grandad's dog to smash you in. By the way the dog is a Yorkshire terrier called ROCKY. Can I say hello to Kevin Dunn who told me about this mag (no you can't – GT).

Jonathon Hind
Putting his fiver towards: Afterburner

● ***There's more to life than mindless violence, you know. Kevin Dunn gets a no-prize for spreading the gospel.***

FOOTBALL MANAGER 2

After reading your review of **Football Manager 2,** I went out, bought it and I haven't put it down since. I would like to give Tony Dillon an OBE (Gee thanks – Tone). It is a mega cool game. I would agree there isn't much sound but everything else in it is brill. The match action is action packed and full of goals.
Kevin Toms deserves a pat on the back for this.

Nice one!

Paul Jackson
Merseyside
Putting his fiver towards: Technocop

● ***Tony says: just call me Sir Terwonee.***



CHRIS

SAMURAI WARRIOR

What in the name of Sam Hill are you playing at, Chris Jenkins. You gave the mega cool **Samurai Warrior** 58%. This game deserves at least 85%, it knocks **Garfield** for six, the way you have to give money to the peasants (unless you're skint or stingy) and fight off your aggressors is brilliant. Some of his features ie feet could have been a bit bigger, I know, but the rest of the game is amazing. If you like martial arts and cartoons (or if you don't like martial arts and cartoons) buy this game, it's a cracker.

Duncan Smith
Littleworth
Staffordshire
Putting his fiver towards: Where Time Stood Still

● ***Some of his features could have been bigger? Is that all you've got to say? And who is this Sam Hill, a social worker?***

HERCULES

Now let me get straight to the point. **Hercules** is utter rubbish. The graphics are good but the game play is crap. I had a few games, then noticed how crap and utterly boring it was. The movements are about 10 times slower than the person you are fighting.

Gremlin graphics could do much better than this. People who buy **Hercules** must be insane (that includes me). I'd give it 19% for graphics, 10% for sound, 5% for playability and 2% for lastability.

I advise anyone not to buy this as it's not worth £7.95, it should cost at least £1.99.

PS Your mag is still mega brill, especially the Megatapes (this is true – GT)

Mark Falconer
Fife
Putting his fiver towards: R-Type

● ***But if your movements were FASTER than the person you're fighting, you'd always win, wouldn't you? Hadn't thought of that, jelly-head?***

ALIEN SYNDROME

How could that Jenkins bloke give such a naff game 89%? I am of course, writing about **Alien Syndrome,** one of the worst games I've played since I bought my Spectrum six months ago. The graphics are only mediocre, and the scrolling is the worst I have ever seen. The extra weapons are mostly useless and the end of level guardians look more like blue and yellow blobs than "obscene masses of quivering protoplasm". The two player option, while quite good fun adds little to the atmosphere. In a nutshell, **Alien Syndrome** is no more than a **Gauntlet** rip-off with a few frills. Think twice before you buy this game.

Andrew Robinson
Whalley
Lancs
Putting his fiver towards: Robocop

● ***Is it really necessary for me to point out that Andrew comes from Whalley? OK, Syndrome is based on the same idea as Gauntlet, but as I pointed out, it feels completely different because it's not just constant shooting.***

DOUBLE DRAGON

I totally disagree with Chris Jenkins' review of **Double Dragon.** 51%. It's worth at least 90% or more. Maybe the graphics are not so hot but the gameplay is megacool. It's got lots more action than **Target Renegade.** PLUS the two player option is super. The Big

The WRITE STUFF?!

Boss with the machine gun in the last level is a big tough cool dude (it's a pity you couldn't give us a demo of **Double Dragon** to show the readers how excellent it is).

Only one small snag. The huge giant haystack lookalikes are twice the size of yourself in the arcades. But overall a good game from Melbourne House.

Colin Jagadowski
Ayrshire
Scotland
Putting his fiver towards: Robocop

● No, no, no, no, no. The gameplay's lousy, so the whole thing's a disappointment. It doesn't matter how much action there is, if it's rotten action. And you're right to kvetch about the giant midgets (or midget giants). So yah boo.



BATMAN

At last! Jim Douglas has produced an acceptable game review of a great game. After years of many unoriginal titles, one game rises from where no man has ever gone before. Yes, **Batman** is here with a new meaning to the words "computer game". The graphics are brill, and the way Batman moves from screen to screen is an absolutely marvellous idea.

But there is a teeny-weeny little problem, the author of this game has a weird sense of colour. But it doesn't really upset the game. All in all, **Batman** is swell.

PS, Who the hell reviewed **Star Farce** – there was no signature!
PPS, Chris, you spell brain B.R.A.I.N. not B.R.A.N.E.

Mr Anonymous
Somewhere silly
Putting his fiver towards: Savage

● Sorry we lost your name, Anny (so if you want your money, write in). Star Farce was reviewed by El Dildoid but he wasn't sticky enough and his name slipped off the page. Brain is spelled B.R.A.N.E. when your brane is as unusual as mine. Perhaps from now on we'll consider giving games a rating for colour co-ordination.

VIRUS

OK Jim, who do you think you are? Who in their right mind would give **Virus** 96%? The ground looks really jerky and as far as 3D effects are concerned you'd be better off with **Vectorball** (which only costs £2.99).

It took me about 10 hours to gain control of my hoverplane and even when I had I didn't feel very excited about it, as every half-hour a dot appears, you throw some little blocks at it and it disappears – thrilling!

Could someone also tell the programmers that triangles on sticks do not constitute trees. So come on Jim, you can review games better than this, surely? **Virus** deserves 65% at the most.

Damian Higgins
Cleveland
Putting his fiver towards: R-Type

● Okay, fair cop. Virus maybe isn't the smoothest 3D game in the world, but it's still a great conversion, so nuts to you . . .

R-TYPE

Yo! Jim Douglas. Just thought I'd drop you a line about your review of **R-Type.**

For once you got it almost right! Yes I'm talking about **R-Type** that mega, blast everything to little pieces affair. 90% – how could I go wrong? I bought the game quicker than you can say 'down with Your Sinclair and viva **SU**.'

The colour, the gameplay, this is the best coin-op conversion I have ever seen! As you burn around the many levels with a formidable arsenal of weapons you wonder if this really is a Spectrum game? And why did **SU** only give it a 90?

The zillions of different types of monsters are all excellent! The reflective and helix lasers are crucially unstoppable! The end of level monsters are just incredible!

Ben Southgate
Boxford
Putting his fiver towards: Savage

● Yes, it is rather good, and how wise of you to agree with me. Award yourself a pat on the head.

OPERATION WOLF

Who says Jim Douglas doesn't get his reviews right? He does – he was right about **Operation Wolf.** Its mega cool graphics and playability have got me hooked. I especially like the way you can shoot the nurses.

Operation Wolf is mega cool and I'd advise anyone who wants one to get it.

Spencer Lee
Clapham Park
London
Putting his fiver towards: Last Ninja 2

● I'd advise anyone who wants one to get it too. Either that or paint your head green.

BATMAN

Robin: Holy battarangs Batman . . . this Jim Douglas . . . He who credited **Savage** with 96% when it should have been 80% or less . . . Gee Batman ol' Jim sure amended his ways by giving you 90% . . . What are we gonna do now Batman?

Batman: Err shut the hell up Robin you daft pillock . . . About the game. It's hardly original is it? And I don't think the overlapping is a good idea. In fact, it's bloody irritating to find where you are and by the time you do you've been shot in the guts or pecked in the pecker.

That aside, I found the graphics pleasing and clearly defined and the gameplay is top notch. I was a little disappointed that there wasn't a 128K version included, but this was made up for the addictiveness of the game. Well done Jim!!!

Keith Ellis
Chelmsford
Essex
Putting his fiver towards: Total Eclipse

● Er, I didn't actually write the game you know, I just review 'em. Although if I did write a game, what a splendiferously superbous game it would be.

Every so often – well very often actually – you write to tell us that we know nothing about anything and insist that some program we trashed is actually the best game ever. Conversely you blast us for saying something is great that you absolutely loath and detest.

Enough is enough. We can't take any more, if you think you're as clever you write the damn magazine. We mean it!

Every month we'll devote a page to a selection of your opinions on the latest software. Don't get mad – write the review you think the game should have received and we (subject only to space) will print it.

Now, aside from seeing your work in print we will send you a crisp £5 – or cheque – to put towards the software title of your choice – tell us what you plan to spend the money on if your review is printed.

You've probably noticed that we don't print pictures any more, so you can stop sending them. Jim only sticks them on his typewriter and burns a hole in them anyway.

So get cracking – write your reviews and send them together with the completed coupon below.

YOUR REVIEWS
Maximum 150 words. No swearing, libel or illegibility and come out of the corner fighting. Don't beat around the bush – tell us straight what you think. Send your review (or any recent game) and fill in the coupon. *Send the lot to The Write Stuff, Sinclair User, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU.

Name...

Address...

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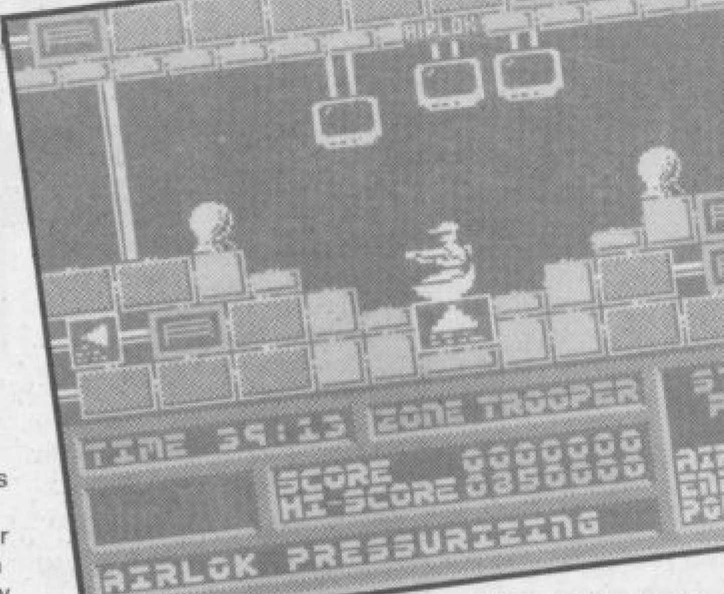
I'm going to put my fiver towards...

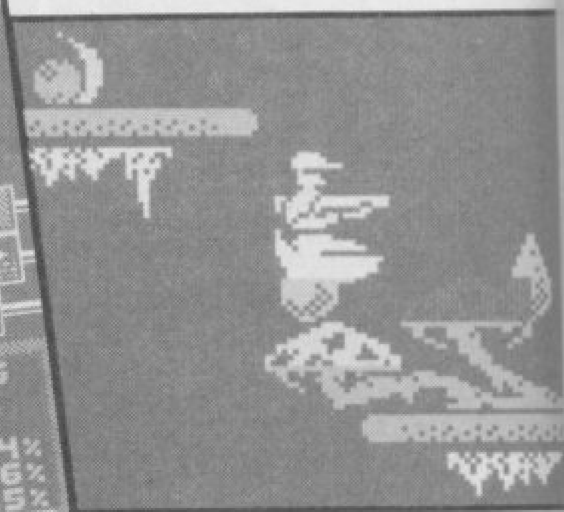
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***Reviews supplied without full name and address will not be considered for publication.**

GAMES REVIEW!

ZONE TROOPER





This is the DANGER ZONE and YOU are the ZONE TROOPER . . . Well you can put me up a chimney if this doesn't ring a bell. Yessir, it's the sole-survivor scenario. Your spaceship has crash-landed on an alien planet. The entire crew is deep in computer-enhanced dreamland like so many frozen peas and you're the only one awake.

Since an eternity of sleep is a little unappealing, you decide that you must collect enough plasma pods in order to save your pals. Quite what the plasma pods do is a little unclear, as is the benefit of waking up thousands of your – probably hungover – mates to let them know the ship's up the Swanee and although they're awake, they're going to starve to death. Still, if it's plasma pods you're after, this would appear to be the place.

If there's one thing that annoys me more than any other in explory-mappy games it's unrealistic jetpac-gravity combinations. **ZT** for example, has an awful lot of obstacles to negotiate, and continually being drawn to the bottom of the screen is nothing short of bloody annoying when you're also trying to avoid homing aliens.

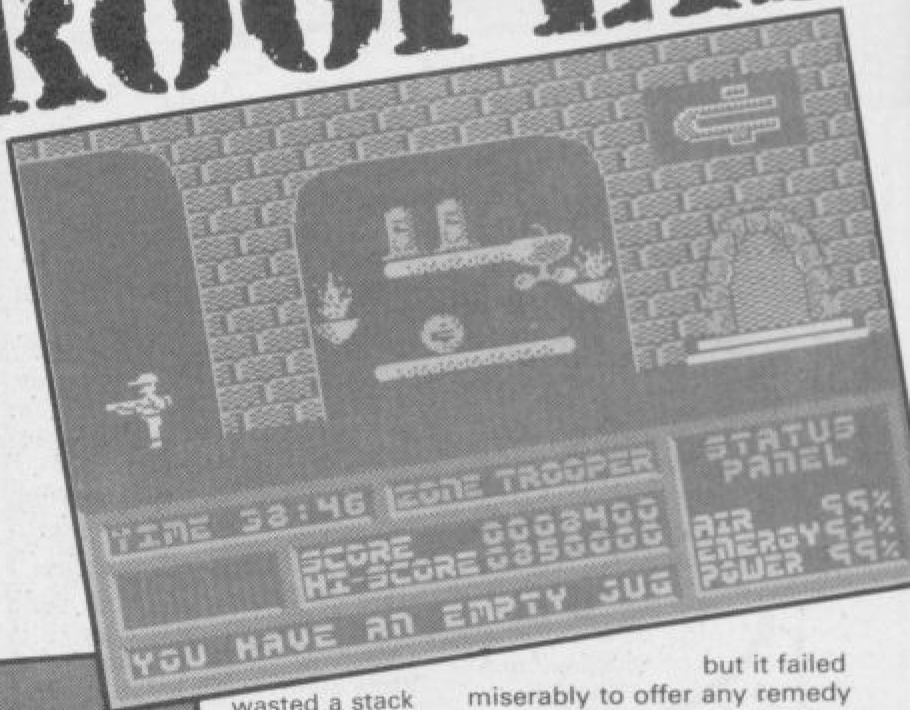
The aliens, too, are of an especially infuriating nature. They take a number of shots before showing any signs of injury and anticipate your flight path, draining energy like little chrome ticks. I'd rather have a fair fight – you shoot them, they die – they shoot you, you die.

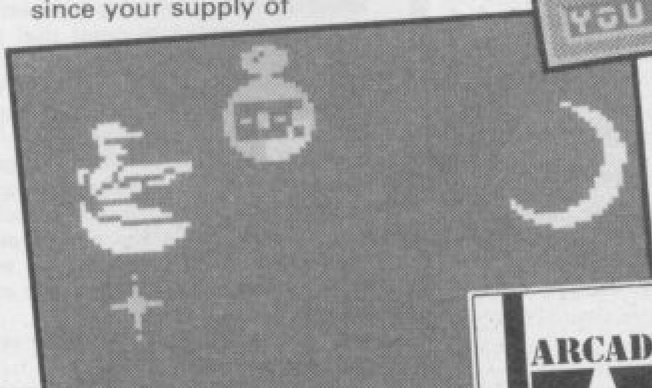
However, on with the bananas. The graphics are colourful and riddled with attribute worries, although far from detailed. In fact the graphic style (oh good Lord. – GT) is a little tricky to pin down. Neither monochromesque detail or colourful Atwellian, it's neo-cubist representationalist, I feel. (You've been reading Arena again Jim. – GT).

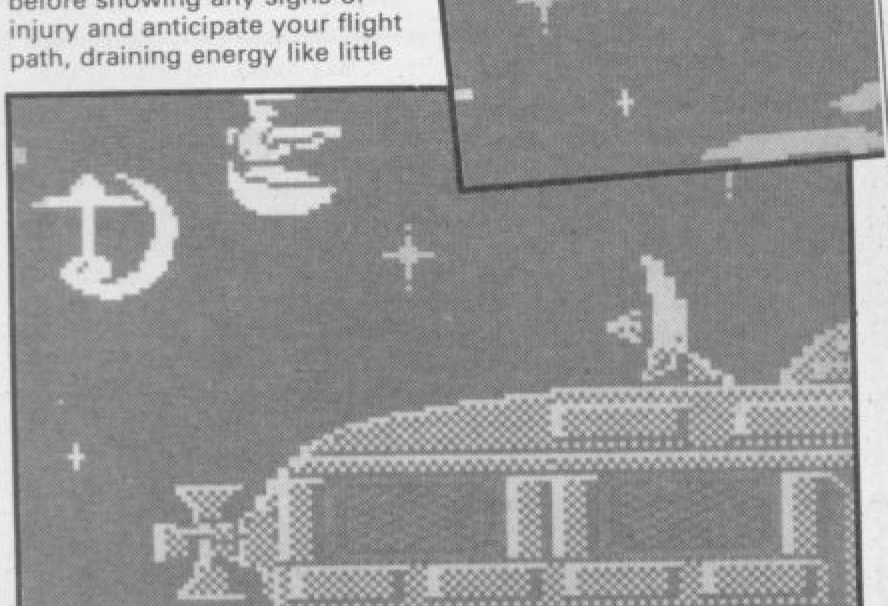
As a result, you certainly don't get much of a buzz from looking at the thing, so gameplay rushes in to save the day. Alas no. While there are a reasonable number of obejcts to pick up, you can evidently only carry one at a time, and since your supply of ammunition is treated as an object, you can't kill anything when in transit to anywhere else. I felt that deciding where objects should be used was a mite unclean and I wasted a stack of time drifting from one place to another only to discover that I had the wrong item with me. Still, that's the "fun" of this sort of game.

Some information can be gleaned from INFONET, the computer system, but it failed miserably to offer any remedy for the intense apathy I felt during the whole affair.

Even being a budget game these days doesn't really excuse such ropey and unappealing game structure.■







ARCADE REVIEW

FAX BOX

ZONE TROOPER *Label:* **Gamebusters** *Memory:* **48K/128K**
Author: **In-house** *Price:* **£1.99** *Joystick:* **Various**

GRAPHICS	SOUND
45	30
50	47
PLAYABILITY	LAST ABILITY

Competent though dull and unoriginal make-a-map romp. Poor.

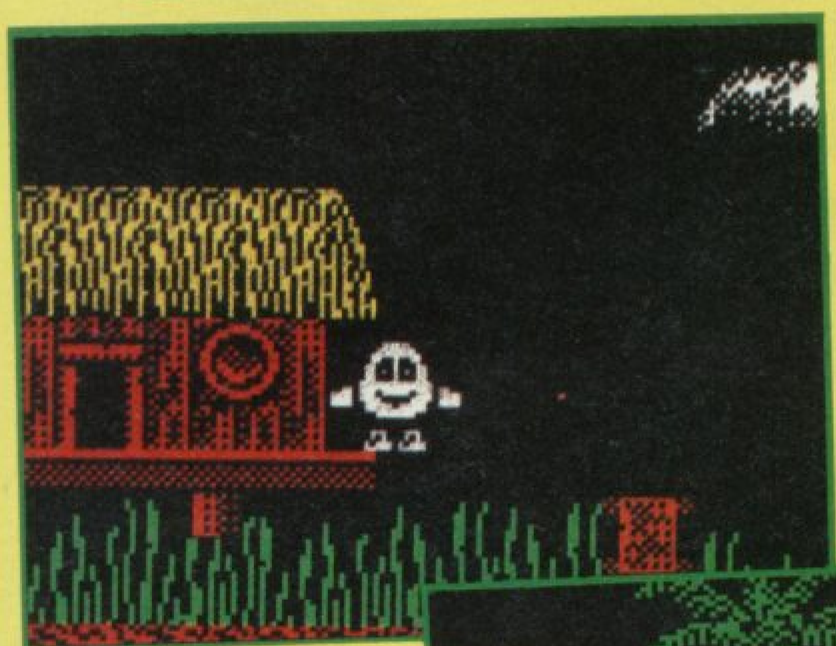
Reviewer: Jim Douglas

OVERALL **44**

10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90



Dizzy's Treasure Island







Har Har! Ha ha harrr! Well shiver me anchor and splice the sails, me hearties, if it ain't old **Dizzy's Treasure Island.** Aaar! An' wot does yer old mate Jim lad think of it all then? Well, ee told me that ee thought it were 'opeless. But I think 'is brain's been addled by the 'ot sun, so I've taken a little looksee meself.

This Dizzy boy is an egg y'see. Not the stomach churnin' disease-ridden rotten eggs you may of heard about recent, like. (Well. – GT) Oh no. E's a real cutie. Anyways while 'e was aboard me ship, 'elpin' out in the galley, there was a terrible accident and 'e inadvertently was pushed overboard. Now, since all eggs float he swam like a goodun and finally got washed up on a desert island.

Now, being a resourceful sort 'o' fellow ee sets about escapin' from the island after lootin' it fer all the treasure ee can. Haa harr!

You control Dizzy with yer joystick an' on top of left an' right ye can somersault either way. Once you've 'ad a bit of an explore, you'll find that you'll need to start usin' the goodies you've collected for fiendish and cunning purposes.

Now. Once ye've got the hang of the controls – they're quite smooth an' ole Dizzy tends te roll around a bit – you'll get more an' more inventive an start learnin' to avoid the traps an' that.

Aar! Ye'll either be the sort of bloke that loves these games what need an object to get an object to use the other object to get the other object, they're called Cause and Effect games, or you'll be the sort wot hates 'em.

Personally, I hate 'em. They're neither involved an' tricky to make the puzzles interestin' or excitin' enough to excuse the pretty poor graphics. There b'aint even a "run-'im-through" option often as not.

Dizzy is rife with colour clash too. Now, I can put up with some washy colour like any man, but only if the graphics are fab enough to excuse 'em. Poor ol' Dizzy changes colour every time he walks in front of a tree or any other bit o' landscape.

I found them problems wot I came across were more infuriatin' than interestin', an' I quickly decided that I didn't really give a weevil ridden biscuit whether Dizzy escaped, drowned, cracked or starved. It's not great to look at, it's average to play an' the lead character isn't the most luvvable shipmate in the seven seas.■

ARCADE REVIEW

FAX BOX

DIZZY** Label: **Codemasters** Author: **The Oliver Twins** Price: **£2.99** Memory: **48K/128K** Joystick: **Various

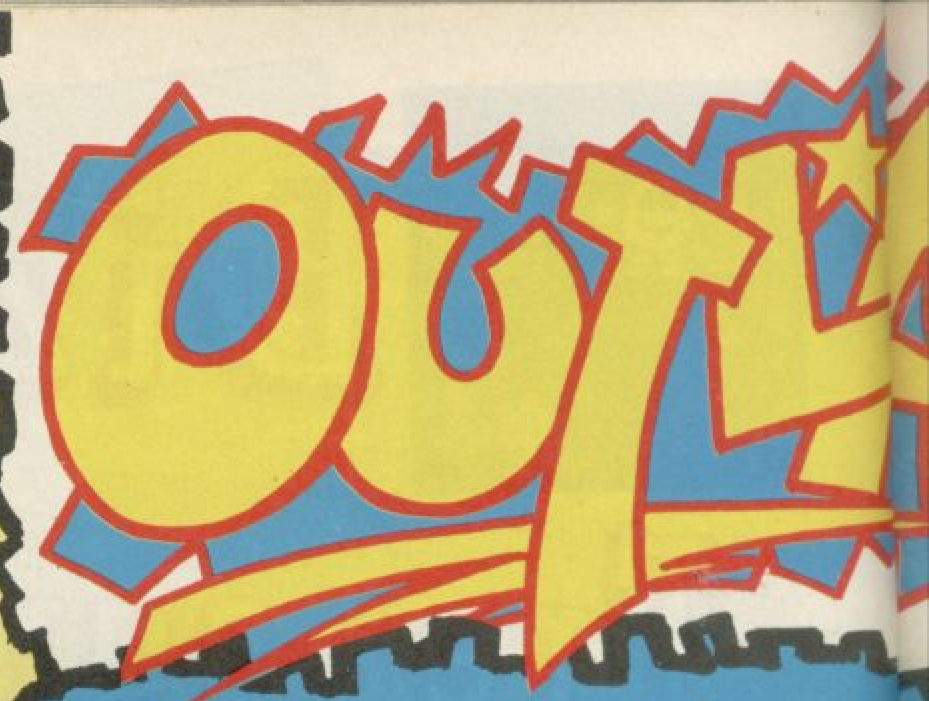
GRAPHICS	SOUND
60	60
50	49
PLAYABILITY	LAST ABILITY

Unsatisfying though popular inevitably sequel.

Reviewer: Captain Bob

OVERALL **60**

10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90



PLAY THAT THANG

Never let it be said that Alan Sugar has no soul; having conquered the worlds of hi-fi, computers and video, Amstrad is now venturing into music. The first effort is the catchily-named CKX100 Keyboard, offering a huge range of facilities including MIDI, for a tiny £129.



The CKX100 has four octaves of miniature keys and is battery or mains powered. It has ten digitally synthesized sounds including electric piano, guitar, flute and strings, and a drum machine with 28 patterns.

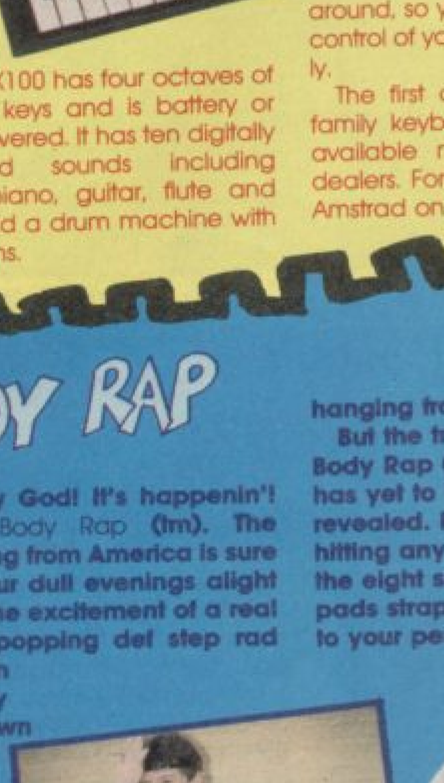
Novices will find lots of useful features including single-finger chords, auto accompaniment, and the revolutionary Playright feature. This automatically adjusts the notes you play to harmonise with the background chords, so you just can't go wrong.

There's a built-in digital melody recorder which allows you to store your performances, save them on standard cassettes and reload them. The MIDI socket lets you play any other MIDI instrument from the CKX100, but not the other way around, so you can't play it under control of your Spectrum. Silly really.

The first of a whole range of family keyboards, the CRX100 is available now from electronics dealers. For more details contact Amstrad on (0277) 228888.

BODY RAP

Oh my God! It's happenin'! It's Body Rap (tm). The latest thing from America is sure to set your dull evenings alight with all the excitement of a real hip-hop popping def step rad concert in the safety of your own home!





At the cost of a mere £40 the Body Rap (tm) outfit will turn you into a very fashionable creature, with lots of wires and electrody things hanging from your limbs.



But the true benefit of the Body Rap (tm) has yet to be revealed. By hitting any one of the eight sound pads strapped to your person, you'll release a fantastic hip-hop sound. There's High Hat Cymbal, High Tom Tom Drum, Low Tom Tom Bass Drum, Cow Bell and Snare Drum. And there's even two sampled voices saying "Body" and "Rap".

(Stop stop this all sounds soooo exciting. – AS.)



The idea is to compose little slapping patterns like the Bavarian fish slapping dance, thus initiating a cacophony of Bobby McHerrinesque sounds. Pew ping Pew Dong!



Well, to be honest it's more pong that ping, but if you're determined to have your mates make jokes about having electric shock treatment and smack you frequently on the nose saying "Sorry Trev, I thought it was a sound pad," then this is the fashion accessory for you.

Body Rap (tm) is produced by Startel (tm), a division of Hasbro Toys.



ANDS



DEF LEPPARD – LIVE VID

Those of you with longish memories will remember that way back in April 88 I raved on and on about how berrilliant Def Leppard are in concert. Now, finally, the Def Leppard Live video has arrived. 90 minutes long, it was filmed in Denver, Colorado, in the good ol' Yoo Ess of Ay in February of last year by none other than that great concert filmist Wayne Isham who (yes that's what we thought – who? – AS) just as a point of information, is one of the members of The Company, who make brilliant promo vids for bands like Leppard, Kiss, Maiden etc.

By using some clever cuts and unusual angles, Wayne has managed to show the boys at their best (not easy – AS), in the round. In the round is the term they've given to themselves playing on a square stage stuck in the middle of an arena or stadium with the audience on all four sides. Sadly they couldn't do that over here, but I think that the video successfully manages to capture the feel of Lepp live.

Ideal for fans, great if you like concerts in general (oh yeah? – AS).

Streetdate: In a month or two.
Label: Channel Five.
Price: TBA.

BLIPVERTS A-GO-GO

Well, the age of the blipvert is nearly upon us, thanks to those purveyors of goods electrical, Amstrad. If you haven't already heard bout SatTV, you can bet your bottom that you won't be hearing the last of it for ages.

By the time this issue appears, you should be able to pop into Dixons and kit yourself up with all the necessary gubbins. And then – assuming the satellite doesn't skip across the stratosphere and burn up while in orbit – you'll be able to pick up SIXTEEN saucy satellite channels beamed from all over the globe.

What you get:

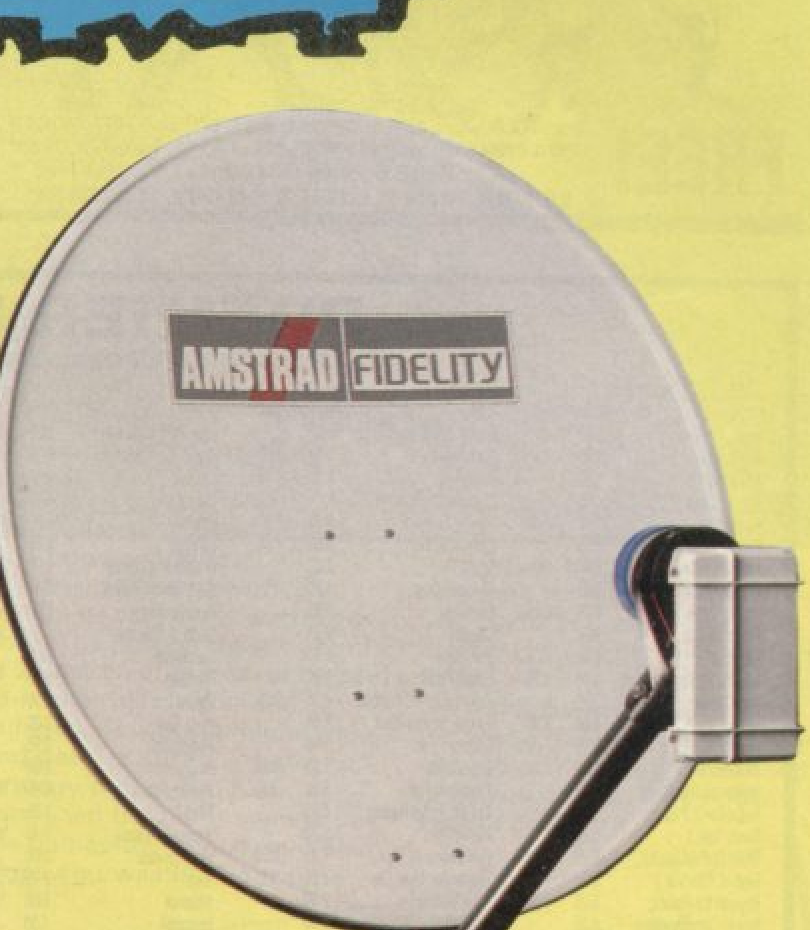
It's difficult to predict exactly what all of the sixteen channels will carry at the moment. Some will inevitably turn into subscription-only channels which you'll have to pay for. At the moment though, we're promised channels specifically for:

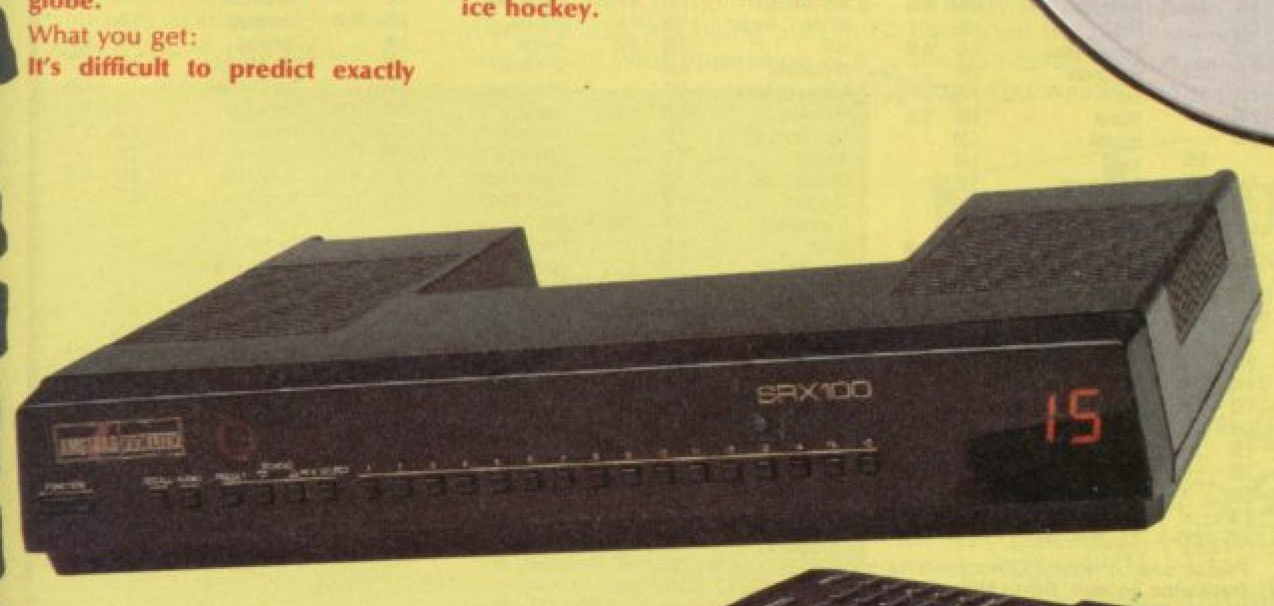
MOVIES – Non stop diet of recent movies day and night.

NEWS – Constant updates of news from around the world.

MUSIC – Euro-disco apocalypse! Non-stop Berlinesque pap and Gary Davies frontmen (veejays, if you will).

SPORTS – Waaaaaaay! One for the lethargic lager louts. This will probably turn out to be the most entertaining channel, since there's no way there will be enough football and darts to keep the station busy for 24 hours, so we'll be treated to women's synchronised shotputting and Australian nude ice hockey.





What you need:

The dish (shown here) attaches to the wall of your house and beams signals recieved from space into your front room and through the mystic black decoder box which in turn is linked to your TV. The whole caboodle shouldn't cost more than £200, though subscriptions to "specialist" channels will cost a certain amount per month.

We need never watch Years Ahead again. (What's wrong with Years Ahead? – GT).

GAMES REVIEW!

ANCIENT BATTLES

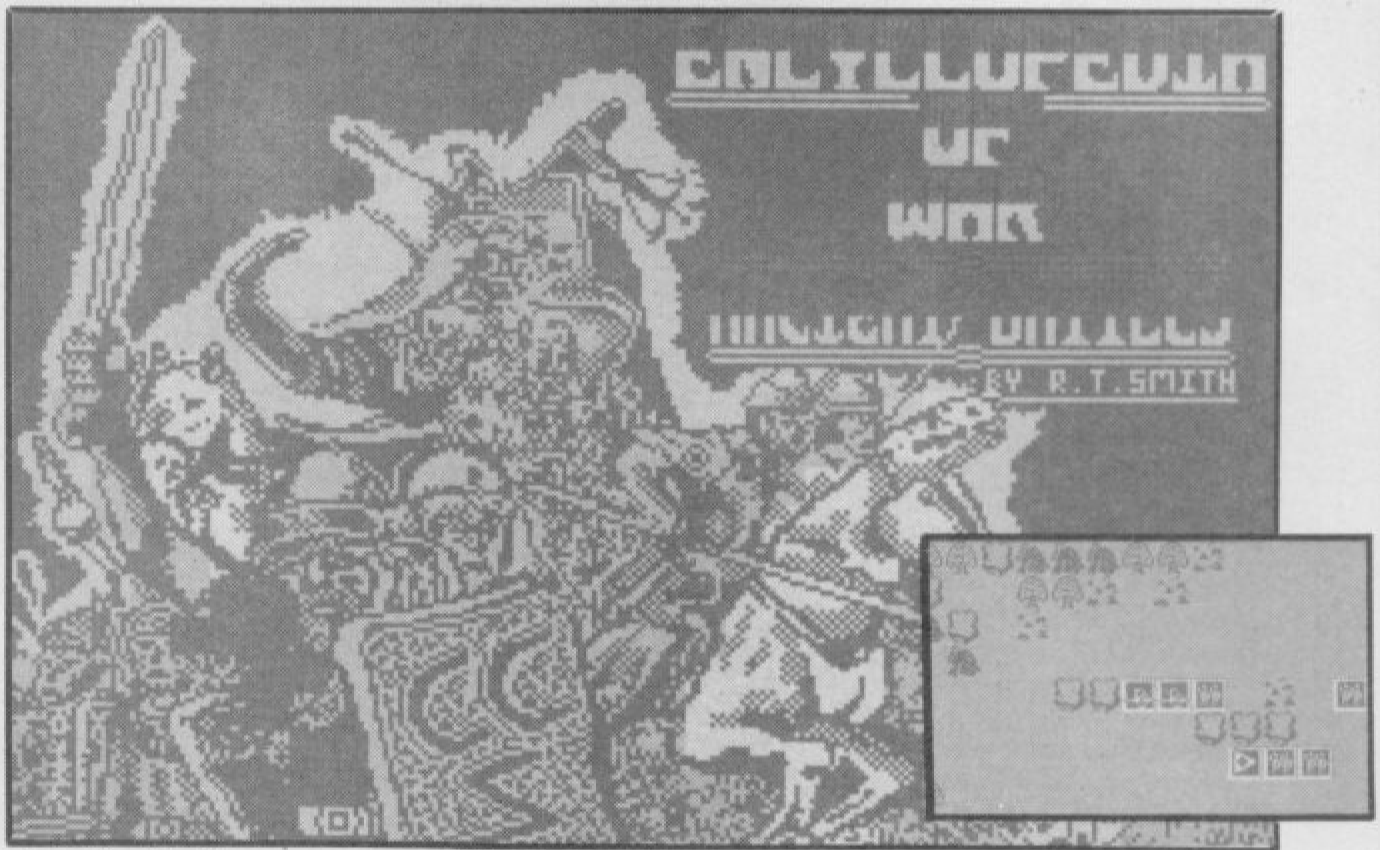
R. T. Smith and CCS are two names which drive most knowledgeable strategy fanatics wild. For your information, Robert 'Call me Bob' Smith has a habit of coming up with some pretty good wargames. His last one, **Vulcan,** was voted Strategy Game of the Year, 1987. It's when he starts doing arcade games, such as **Cyberknights,** that things start to crumble.

CCS has, in a very select circle, a very high reputation. Right from the start they have brought out original and entertaining strategy and simulation titles; one of their first, **The Prince,** winning a major industry award back in 1984. **Ancient Battles** is fab, and what's more, you don't have to be a strategy or historical buff to enjoy it.

Ancient Battles is your chance to re-enact five very different but real battles, ranging from battle of the River Hydaspes in 326BC to up to minute wars such as Battle of Chalons in 451AD.

As wargames go, there's really nothing new about the way **AB** works. There are two opposing forces, each represented as a series of icons scattered about a 'board', each icon representing a unit or batallion. Each of the two 'leaders' takes it in turn to issue orders to its units. These orders can be any of two main things. Move or fire.

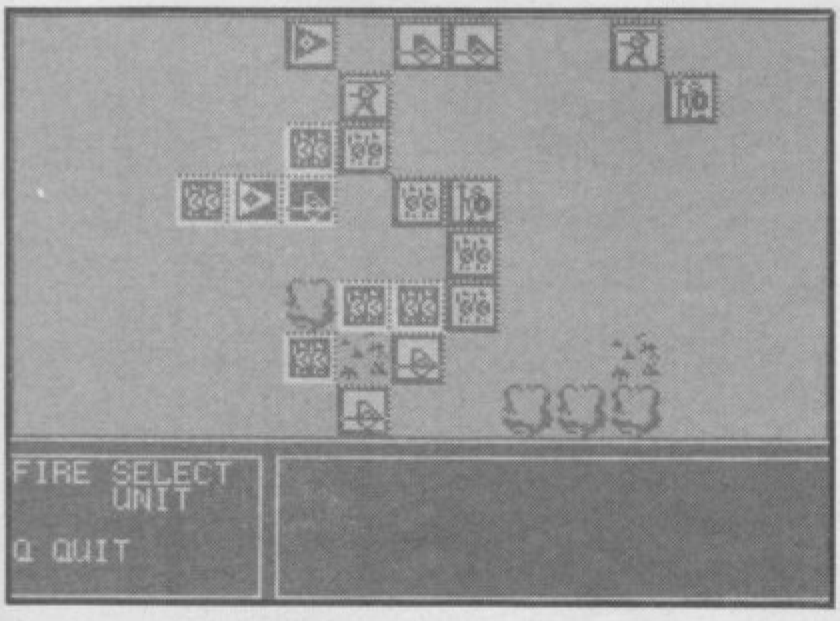
Each unit has a specific number of moves available during a turn, and different terrains use up different numbers of these movement points. Attack options are determined by the weaponry held by the unit.



Of course, you can't attack the enemy until you see them, and if the enemy aren't present in your field of vision, then they won't show up on the screen when you're playing. Being the last unit stuck in the middle of a dense wood, not being able to see any of your opposition is a little nervewracking.

Either side can be under human or computer control, or both. The human takes control of all the chief pieces, and the computer handles all the minions. This is a brilliant idea, and one I'm sure a lot of strategy buffs wish had happened before. It speeds up the gameplay no end, and also stops you wasting your time with a two-bit patrol of six unarmed footsoldiers, when you could be thrashing the enemy to within an inch of their lives.

It's difficult, but then again, it's worth the effort. Amazingly easy to pick up, but be warned, once you do, you'll be hooked. I know I am■



ARCADE REVIEW

FAX BOX

ANCIENT BATTLES *Label:* **Cases Computer Simulations** *Author:* **R. T. Smith** *Price:* **£14.95** *Memory:* **48K/128K** *Joystick:* **Various**

GRAPHICS 59 | SOUND 40 | PLAYABILITY 96 | LAST ABILITY 94

Fun, fabbo wargame. A worth successor to *Vulcan.*

Reviewer: Tony Dillon

OVERALL **90**

TH



Hello mortals. I don't know if you have suffered the traumas of moving house, but it is as nothing compared to moving an entire Academy.

The move appears to have affected the postman, although I have to admit that the problem could lie with one of the experimental phases of a new spell, during which I accidentally turned the poor chap into a tin of Whiskas Supermeat. The postman doesn't knock twice any more, so if any of you are suffering delays to your post then rest assured that I am working on a spell to turn the chap back into a human.

The trickle of mail brought one or two items that may amuse or entertain, including the first few suggestions in the Name That Panther competition. While some are nothing more than downright rudery (shame on you master . . . can't I reveal the name? . . . oh, very well then), one or two others do show signs of breeding and intelligence, and I shall be revealing the winner of the competition in next month's Sorceress.

Listen, do you want to know a secret, do you promise not to tell? (I feel a song coming on). Last month I told you all about Official Secrets, a mysterious body of people responsible for afflicting untold bargains on all we Spectrum adventurers If you weren't reading, SHAME ON YOU, but I shall tell you their address again anyway. They live at PO Box 847, Harlow, Essex CM21 9PH. Write to them, tell them that you heard about their existence from The Sorceress, and I might get invited to their next Christmas party. I assume my invitation to last year's was lost in the post.

We all admire Magnetic Scrolls for their ability to come up with a jolly good adventure yarn, and they have teamed up with Official Secrets to come up with something of a very interesting nature. This is a mini-adventure called **Myth,** based on the antics of the Greek gods, who as we all should know got up to some pretty dirty tricks in their time. **Myth** is, of course, available for the Spectrum + 3, but only to members of Official Secrets. It is not going on general release, so it would appear to me that the only way to acquire a copy is by joining the Official Secrets Club.

This costs £19.95, which is a bit much even for a Magnetic Scrolls adventure, and a mini one at that. However, there is much more to Official Secrets than that. For you £19.95 you get a copy of **Myth,** automatic membership of Special Reserve (which usually costs £4.00 and I told you all about that last ish), six issues of their magazine Confidential, a copy of Level 9's **Gnome Ranger** (or a surprise alternative if you already possess the game, which you should), a telephone help line, and the opportunity to enter a competition and win £500 of computer hardware just by sending in tips, maps, or solutions. I may enter myself. As a competitor, that is, not a prize.

Do you know, there is one thing that distinguishes a Sorceress from a mere mortal,

DANGER MOUSE

Part One continued. Having gone down stream, crossed the stepping stones and filled the bottle with water, we must now turn back to the near bank. Follow the twisty path, take the lantern, enter the mine, keep the lamp, go to the stream, follow the stream, go up stream, press on, press on, press on, press on, go to the clearing, follow the tracks, follow the murky moat, follow the murky moat, launch the boat, enter the boat, climb up using the rope, take the red herring, go up the stone steps, continue up to the top, take the feather, go down the stairs, give the gorilla the feather, take the compass, go towards the light, follow the murky moat, follow the murky moat, enter the forest, go up stream, press on, press on, press on, give him the ring, go to the clearing, follow the tracks, follow the murky moat, follow the murky moat, enter the boat, climb up using the rope, give him the flask to be continued!

INGRID'S BACK!

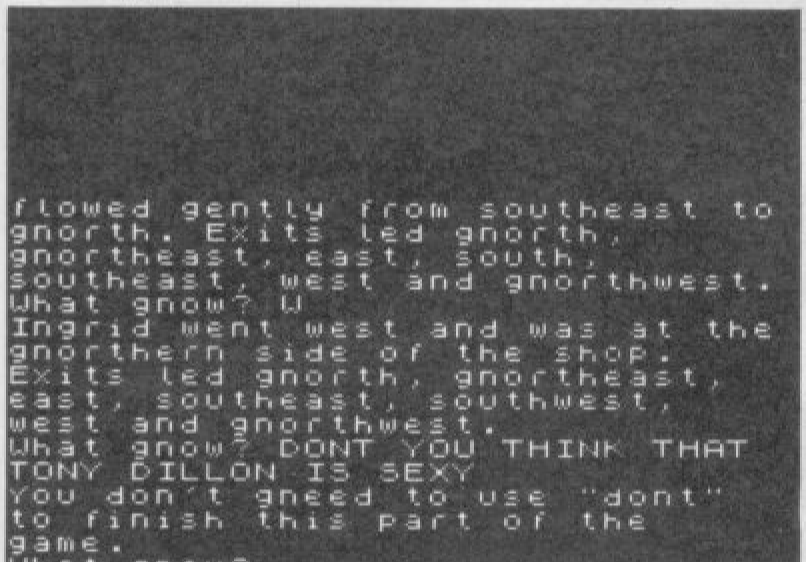
Rush to shop, buy game, come home, read packaging, turn computer on, buy next month's Sinclair User!

LOADS OF MIDNIGHT

Part Three. Password for part two is LAST TIME, password for part three is DEEP GULLY. From the start then: Inventory, N, W, N, NW, SW, W, W, S, get sword, N, E, E, NE, E, E, SE, E, N, N, NE, kill Sulkrin, examine Sulkrin, get envelope, SE, E, in, get knife, out, get licence, W. NW, SW, S, S, W, NW, W, W, give licence, look, get certificate, examine certificate, NW, NW, NW, W, give certificate, get armour, wear armour, in, look, get token, out, E, SE, SE, SE, E, E, SE, E, insert token, get newspaper, examine newspaper, wear crown, N, N, NE, NW, W, W, W, W, kill men, in, get key, out, N, W, in, thrown crown . . . end of part three . . . adventure completed. "And so it was that Ludo Son of Ludwig became King of the Land of Midnight! Congratulations! You have, believe it or not, completed 'Loads of Midnight'. So, in the darksome Land of Midnight amongst the evil beasts and cold mountains, we leave Ludo again to his toils and troubles." I hope he stays there, personally!

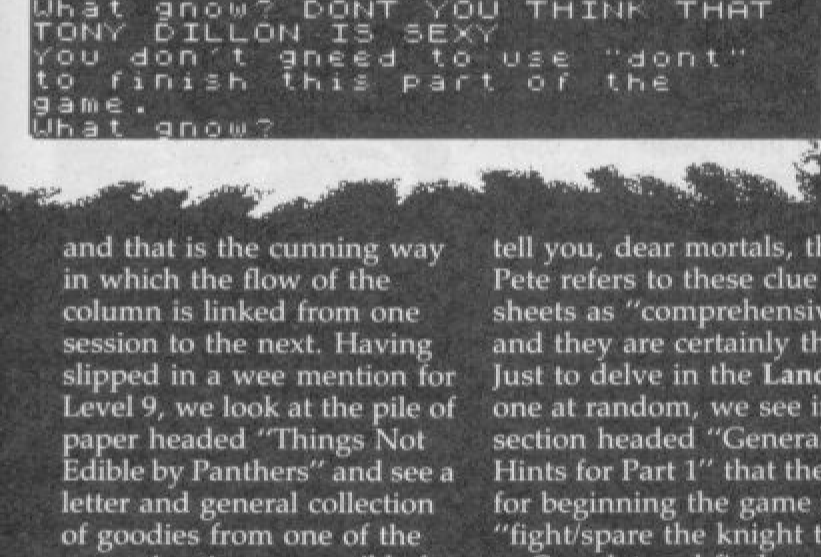
THE SORCERESS

Stuck in a dungeon or helpless at the hands of fetid trolls? Write to The Sorceress SU Priory Ct, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU.



and that is the cunning way in which the flow of the column is linked from one session to the next. Having slipped in a wee mention for Level 9, we look at the pile of paper headed "Things Not Edible by Panthers" and see a letter and general collection of goodies from one of the many Austins responsible for running the company. Pete Austin, in fact. What does he have to say? Read on . . .

Haha! We find clue sheets for Level 9's two newies, **Lancelot** and **Ingrid's Back!**



Apparently, according to Pete Austin, "it still costs several thousand pounds in time and printing costs to produce a new clue sheet". Just you keep sending them to me, my boy, and we shall remain good friends. Let me tell you, dear mortals, that Pete refers to these clue sheets as "comprehensive", and they are certainly that. Just to delve in the **Lancelot** one at random, we see in the section headed "General Hints for Part 1" that the clue for beginning the game is "fight/spare the knight then to Camelot and find somewhere to sleep, for example Merlin's bed, which is in Merlin's Guest Room north of Merlin's study. From the Serf's Gate this is E, E, N, N, W, W, W, N, ?," That was several clues strung together, I might add!

Another little item from part one concerns finishing that particular part, which involves freeing the knights and returning to Arthur, rescuing Guenever from Meliagaunt, accepting her invitation then rescuing her again, visiting Geunever to say goodbye and defeating the ambushing knights." Again, several clues strung together. So now you have the start and end of part one, but what about the bits in the middle? Ah well, can't tell you everything now, can I?

As with the **Ingrid's Back!** clue sheet, items covered are General Hints, Objects, Creatures and People, and Places. If you can't solve an adventure using those sheets, you'll never solve one. A very good idea for both new and experienced adventurers, methinks. So when's **Spook** coming out, Pete?

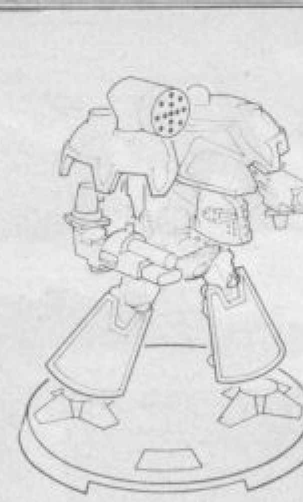
I was going to tell you something about the Silicon Dreams version of **Snowball** also from Level 9, but space precludes that this month. As it does for a game called **The Crystal Cavern** from Handasoft (25 Ingleton Road, Off Penny Lane, Mossley Hill, Liverpool L18 1HJ) at a price of just £1.99. The Adventurers Club Ltd rave over it, we shall see next time.

There is a clatter in the kitchen, I rush to investigate . . . there is an empty tin of Whiskas Supermeat on the floor . . . that stupid panther has just eaten the postman! Now that could cause a few problems. I shall leave you now while I sort out the mess. Goodbye!

WITTS END

THE KEEPER If you're having trouble getting across the toll bridge, try giving the man a gold con. If you haven't found the gold coin, then climb a vine, take the key, go north and have a look! Keep getting killed by the Keeper of Death? Make sure that you're wearing your armour and that it is oiled. If you then throw the liquid from the chalice, that will sort out the nasty Keeper of Death. If you can't get into the Castle Wall, then wait until Tag the dog scrapes at the base of the wall and reveals a small hole. If you then go West and can't get past Fendragon, GRAB PIKE and KILL FENDRAGON, although these two commands may have to be repeated until the deed is done. From that point on you can take the princess into your arms and you are almost there. I can't do everything for you! **THE SWAMP** If you're having a spot of bother actually getting anywhere, then keep roaming around until you find the bottle, go north twice and then HANG BOTTLE. An archway appears and you can head East. If you keep getting burned after repairing the door, then Get Sand, Repair Door, North, Throw Sand. Handy stuff, sand. A tin is vitally important, so Dig Soil and Get Tin, Drop Spade (you haven't got a spade0 Not a million miles from the flowers), South three times, East, Turn Tap and Fill Tin. A spot of West, North, Get Figurine, North, West, Give Water will take you further on. If you can't get a Wounded Creature to move aside, then give it the figurine. If you can't get a Stone Face to move aside, then give it some chippings, at which point East and then Use Flowers should get you going. Oh yes, if an Orc appears then Kill Orc sorts things out for you. Random things Orcs, no brains.

BOARD GAME SPECIAL

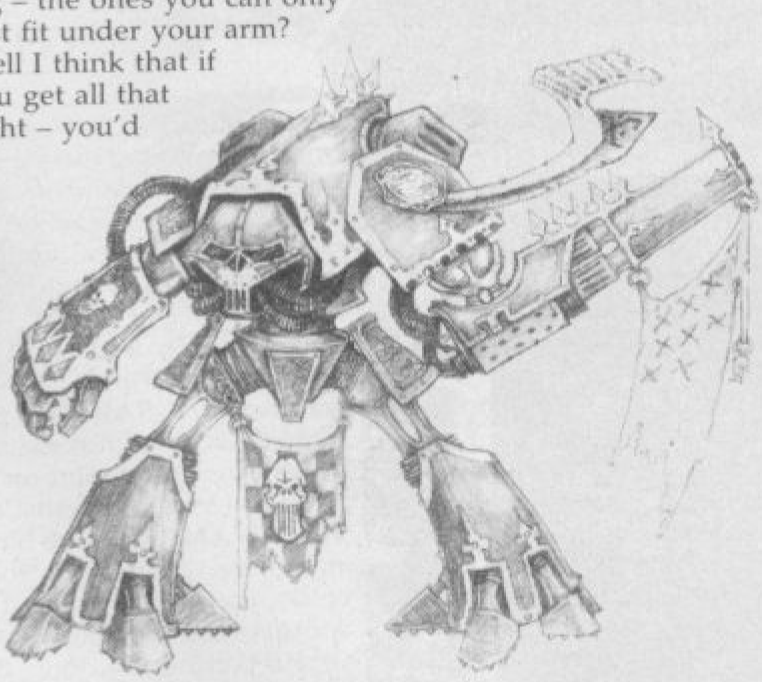


In the beginning there were board games – you know the stuff. **Monopoly, Mine a Million, Scrabble.** But they were incredibly boring and reserved only for those Christmas occasions when the aged relatives declare that "they never had television in her day and folk used to make their own entertainment," and the games are dragged down from the top of the wardrobe, to be played by an assortment of rabble, most of whom wouldn't know the rules if they hit them firmly in the gob.

But then things started to change. **Steve Jackson Games** started to produce rather fab, pocket money sized jobs like **Ogre,** that you could play in the lunch break, and which were wonderful beyond most sentient beings' wildest dreams.

Yet still, something was wrong with even these paragons of gameplay-eeness. They fitted into your pocket, and only consisted of a few cardboard counters and a map. What about if you had huge maps? What about if the playing pieces were models that you snapped or glued together and could paint?

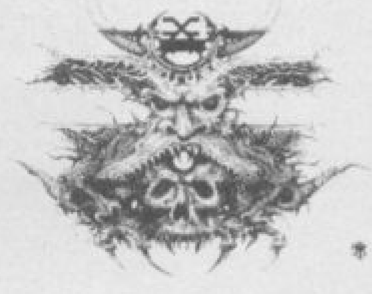
And even more so, what if the boxes were really, really big – the ones you can only just fit under your arm? Well I think that if you get all that right – you'd have more or less Games Workshops' range of 3-D board games, that's what. The two latest, **Adeptus Titanicus** and **Dark Future** both have huge boxes – I should hope so too at the £24.95 price point – so they must be good, mustn't they? **Dark Futures** is a game set in a **Mad Max** kind of post-modern ecological disaster style environment on the wide open (and now wild) freeways of the USA in 1995. The States are ruled by big corporations and the lawlessness on the roads curbed by Sanctioned Operatives (Ops).



You should not necessarily be put off by the 114 page rules book – as GW say themselves, it's comprehesive rather than complex, carrying vast amounts of background material about the 'world' in which **Dark Future** is set. The process of getting into the rules themselves is helped by GW putting in a simplified 'tournament' version which acts as an introduction to the major concepts.



Taken to its furthest limits, however, **Dark Future** can be a challenging fun game – with you designing your own vehicles and equipping them with hardware beyond that even of an XR3i.



Shooting, ramming, sideswiping – all those things you've ever wanted to do in a traffic jam – this and more is delivered by **DF** . . . well worth a look by those who have long been bored by Waddingtons **Formula One.**



Then there comes **Adeptus Titanicus** – this one set in the far distant future over 10,000 years from now. The Imperium seems to be rearing



its ugly head again, the galaxy is in turmoil and these huge fighting machines, Titans, seems to be having a whale of the time kicking (or at least lasering) the hell out of each other.



According to Grand Master Augrim, Division Militaris Order of the Imperial Eagles, "The Orders of the Adeptus Titanicus are the iron fist of the Emperor's rule. A velvet glove would serve no purpose." Well, he should know, bu it doesn't make fitting the bits of the Titans together any more easy, I can tell you.

40-80 feet high in real life, crewed by teams of three to five men (via mind-impetus units) these are weapons platforms that can carry Heavy Weapons (say a Laser Canon), Very Heavy

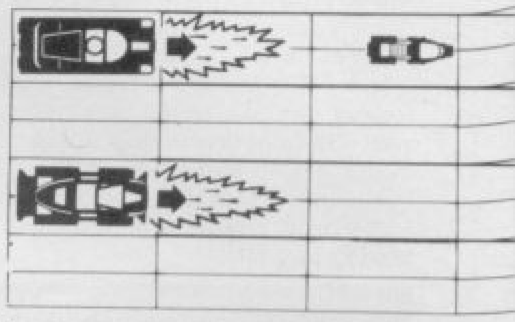


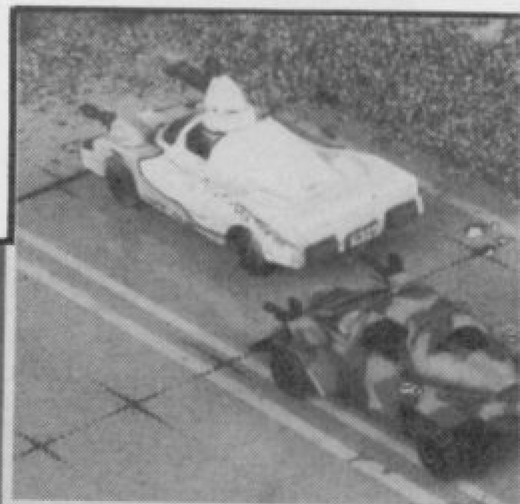
Weapons (a Macro Cannon maybe), Close Combat Weapons (a Black and Decker special . . , the Chain Fist, for example) or target-seeking missiles.



The set scenarios have Imperial and Rebel Titans swiping it out between each other, with Basic Rules for starters and Advanced ones (allowing you to design your own Titans etc) for those with more than 2 'O' levels.

Once assembled – even better, painted, the robots slug it out like the heavyweights they are . . .





An Express Op tangles with the Spiders from Mars, while a Sand Devils' Renegade prepares to join the fray. ▶

▼ **Flare-out! It can be unwise to get in way of the truck . . .**

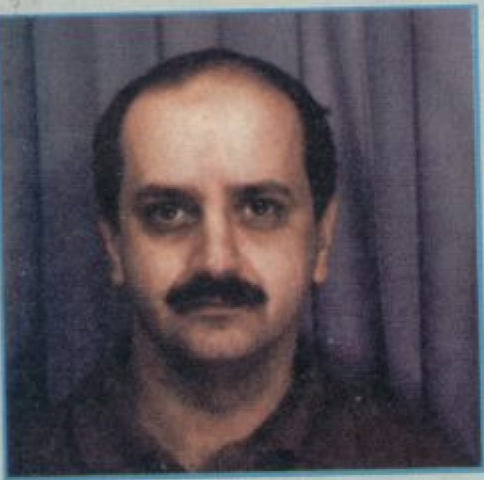




and if you got well into it, you could even found a new Order of Titans yourself and play a whole Company.

Both games are relatively uncomplicated, fun especially with all these models around and assuming the £24.95 isn't a handicap – worth getting hold of. Try your local games shop or contact Games Workshop at Chawton St, Hilltop, Eastwood, Notts. Tel (0773) 769731.





BLUE

VORTEX

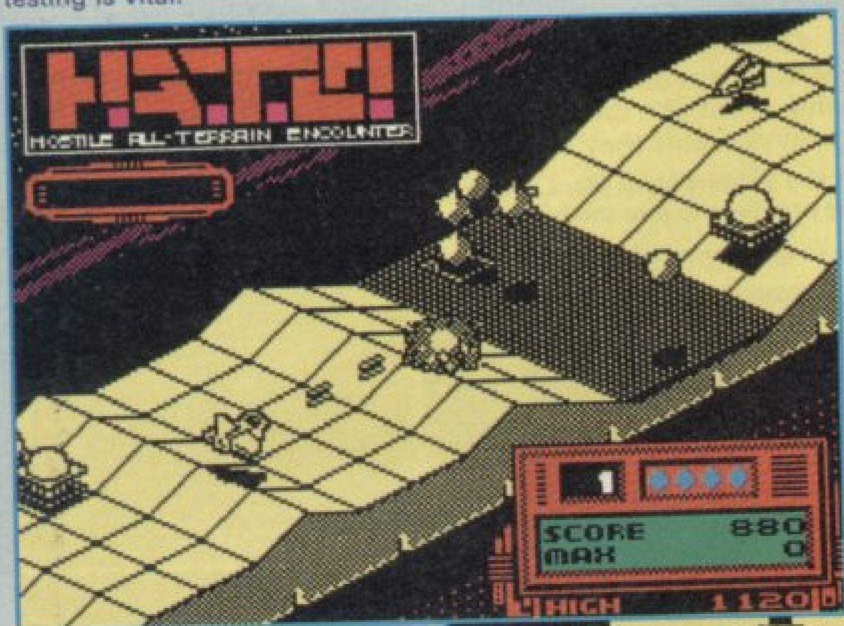
H.A.T.E. is the latest of a series of highly regarded programs from Vortex, most of them the work of Costa Panayi. Game development usually take 9-10 months, though beginning a game is always the hardest part.

H.A.T.E. followed a typical pattern, a tough time getting the format right, followed by a period when ideas come thick and fast, with the final few weeks again difficult with the programmers living, eating and sleeping the game.

It is in the last few weeks of development that playability can be lost – programmers get too close to their project, so thorough play testing is vital.



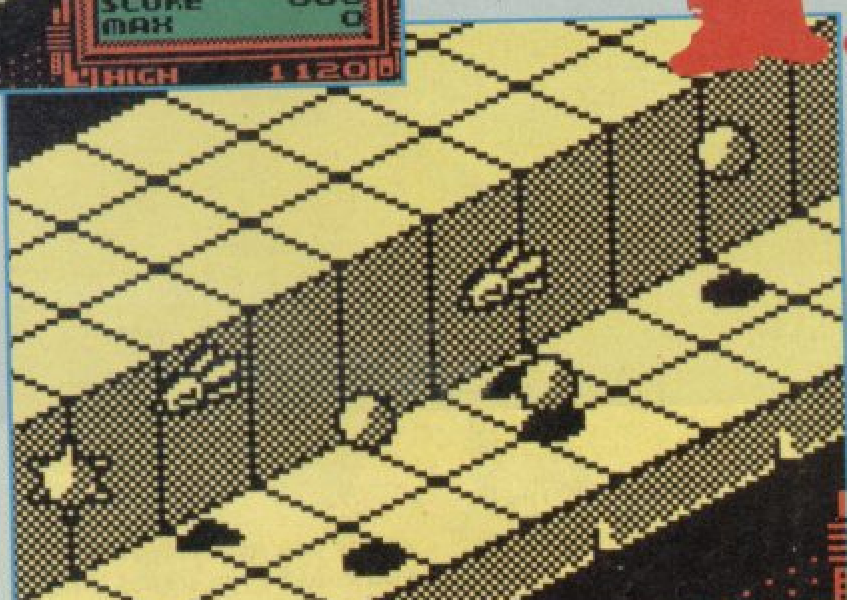
The completed game took some of the visual ideas Vortex first introduced with the 'Highway' games (see bottom right) but introduced an undulating landscape and speeded up the scrolling to give the whole game an 'action' feel.



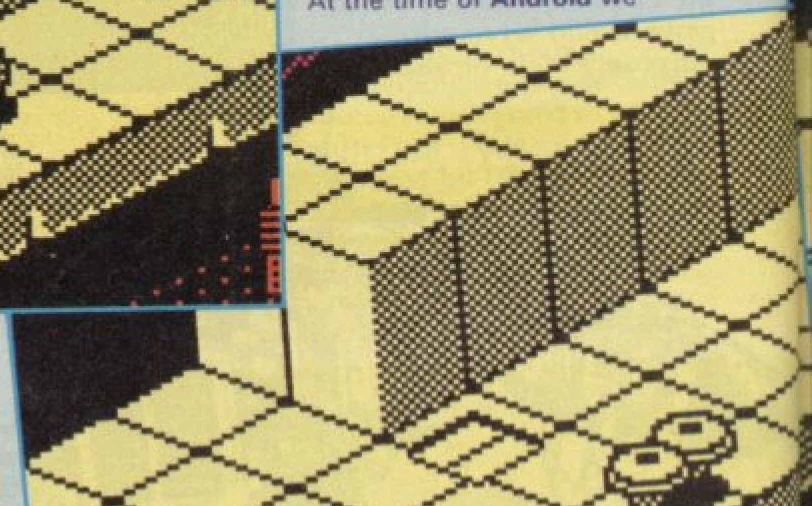
H.A

H.A.T.E

Once we had come up with the initial ideas for the game, Costa took over the main programming; usually 75% of the game is finished before you can







even see anything on the screen.

Sometimes as new routines are contested things can get a little fraught: A TYPICAL CONVERSATION

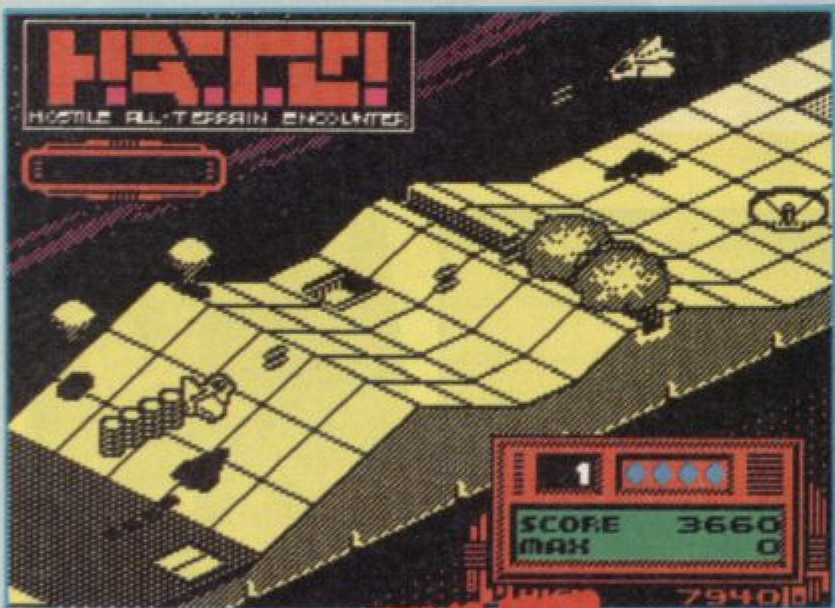
Costa: I have devised a new super routine to handle everything!
Luke: Have you tried it?
Costa: Yes!
Luke: Does it work?
Costa: No, it crashed!
Luke: Check the numbers then, you know you can't add up (I always have to have the last word – I have to keep him in his place).

3D GAMES

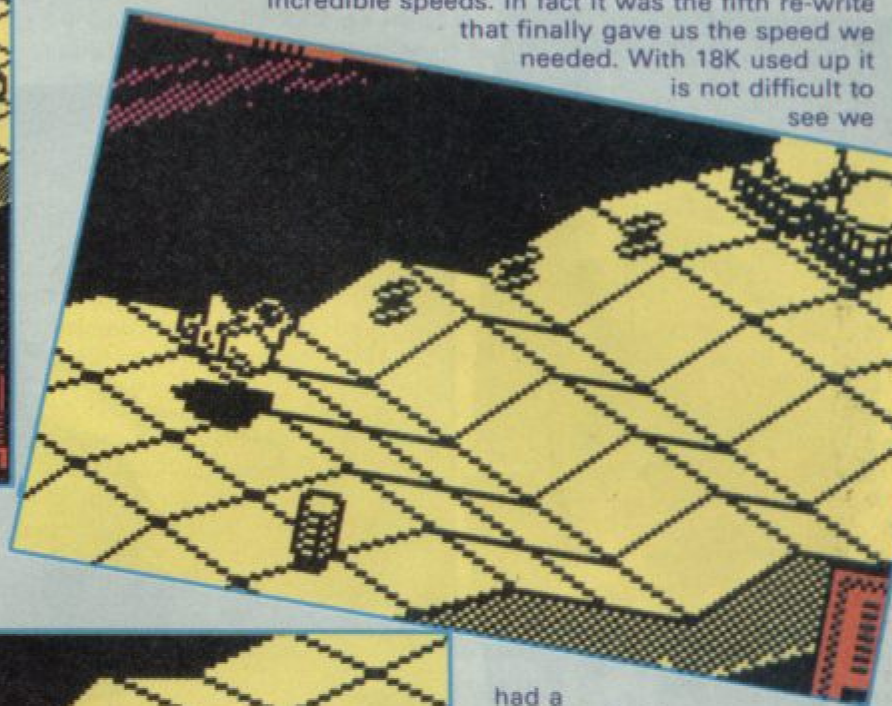
Vortex has specialised in 3D games since the days of **Android Z** – a good 3D game provides the unexpected as well as excitement. At the time of **Android** we

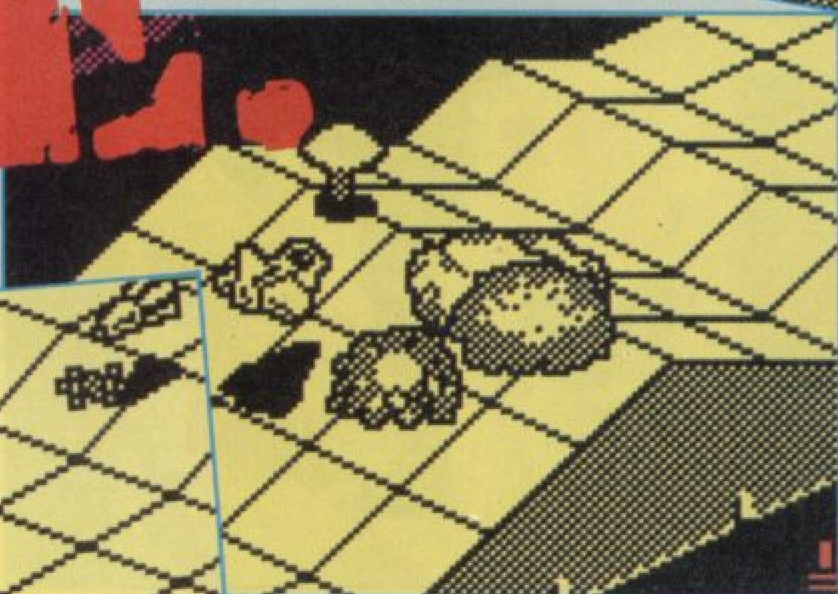
PRINT

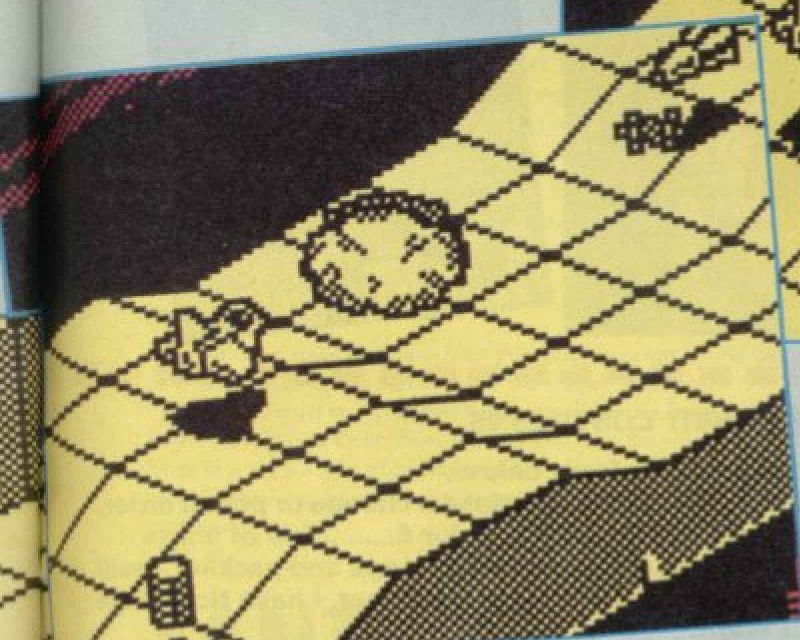




.T.E.







thought the process could not be improved. We were wrong; with **TLL** we added height and greater movement, **Highway Encounter** gave us speed and smoothness, and **Revolution** mixed all these elements.

THE 3D IN H.A.T.E.

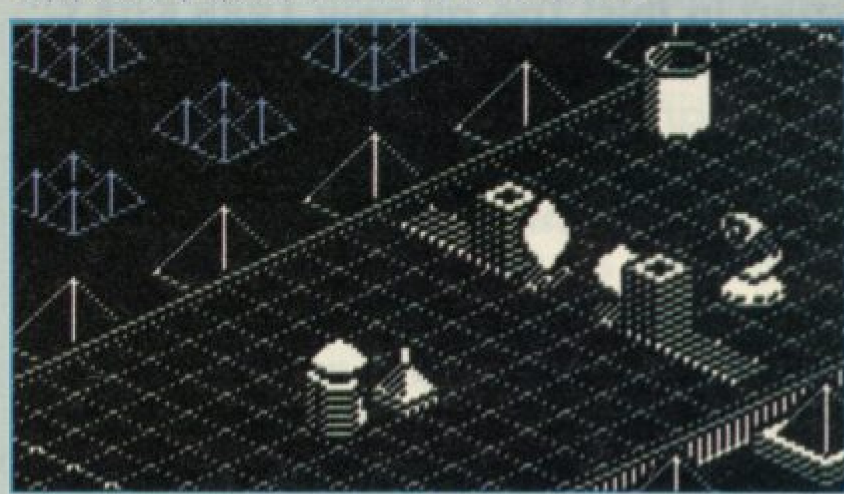
Many of our existing routines had to be rewritten in **H.A.T.E.**; this was largely due to the change in memory allocation. **Cyclone** for example needed a large number of character sets. In **H.A.T.E.** we used 18K solely for the scrolling.

Two pixel scrolling is a fairly simple bit of programming until you see how it slows down on the screen. Several unconventional techniques had to be employed to update all the 3D characters at incredible speeds. In fact it was the fifth re-write that finally gave us the speed we needed. With 18K used up it is not difficult to see we had a problem finding memory for the rest of the game.

In the event the 3D technique used was a version of the **Highway Encounter** technique with an upgrade on the speed at which the individual characters were dumped whilst allowing for the scroll.

H.A.T.E., THE END RESULT

We hoped to produce a fast smooth shoot 'em up which is easy and enjoyable to play. We believe we have succeeded.



Alien Highway – an early predecessor of H.A.T.E. which introduced the diagonal 3D layout and 'roadway' concept.

OI! BUY THIS!



No messin'. You young punks gotta be seen in this! The all-new 1988 SU T-Shirt is totally great and comes with the near legendary punk from the amazing Street Fighter **issue of SU. It does not only guarantee instant credibility on the street, it comes in a choice of two fabulous sizes; XXL for really big people and medium for normal type people. It's also pretty cheap for something that is so totally marvellous. So buy it OK?**

THE SU T-SHIRT COSTS £5.95

Please complete the form below:
Send me .... T-shirt(s). I enclose a cheque or postal order, made payable to 'Sinclair User' for £......... (no of shirts times £5.95). This price includes postage and packing. I will wait 28 days for my T-shirt but no longer. I have ticked the size that I want.

Name ....
Address ....
..
..

Tick size required: Extra Large ☐ Medium ☐

SEnd completed form to: SU Punk T-Shirt Offer, EMAP PREMIUM SALES, 14 HOLKHAM ROAD, ORTON SOUTHGATE, PETERBOROUGH PE2 0UF

I'VE GOT THIS PROBLEM

Gizmo gone bonkers? Can't get your thingy connected? Don't be afraid to tell us . . .

I'VE got this problem with my 48K Spectrum + and its Multiface 1. I get fed up with multiload games that make me reload the first bit when I fail on the higher levels.

Can I get a Ram pack to turn my computer into a 128K Spectrum, or is there a conversion kit? If so, will my Multiface work?

Kevin Lane
Bridgwater
Somerset

● A noted surgeon writes: There were some experimental operations in the early days to transplant large lumps of Ram into the smaller Spectrums. However, due to the medical fact that the Spectrums invariably died these were soon abandoned. As were the Spectrums, in fact.

No. You can't. And if you could, the Multiface wouldn't work.

I want to use a printer with my Spectrum +3. I'm getting the Tasword +3 word processor, so I want one that will work with that. What one should I get, where can I get it and how much will it cost? And will I need a lead?

Daniel Smith
Croydon
Surrey

● The Spectrum +3 will work with just about any printer produced, except the original ZX Printer and the Alphacom 32. Depending on how much pocket money you get, you can start at under a hundred for a very cheap dot matrix and go up to several thousand pounds for a laser printer. Not many Spectrum owners use laser printers.

You can get suitable printers in any computer shop, or mail order from a magazine. The things to look for are a Centronics interface (sometimes called a parallel interface) and Epson compatibility. If a printer has both these things, then it will work with your +3 and Tasword. There are many good printers for around 150 pounds; Star, Taxan/Kaga, Seikosha and Amstrad are names to look out for. If that's too much, second-hand printers are not uncommon but see it working first!

You'll need a lead. It's called the PL-1 (for Printer Lead One . . .) and anywhere that sells Sinclair or Amstrad computers will have them by the bucketload.

THE present I longed for arrived at Christmas – a Multiface 3! I have read the Speccy manual but can't figure out how to 'Format a disc' in order to copy tape to disc. Help!

PS – My dad was raised on train sets and Dinky toys. He thinks the Spectrum manual may as well be written in Chinese!

Nicki Alexander
Murton

●Oh he does, does he? Open that fine book at page 7, and glance down at the list of who contributed. Chinese . . . ha. Do I "look" Chinese?

Your problem is really simple. Put a new disk to be formatted into disc drive, ah so. Select option '+3 Basic' flow main menu, and then type Format 'A1'. Then press Enter key. When light stops flashing, turn disc over and repeat. You have formatted disk. Confucious, he say read pages 36, 37 and 38 of manual if still beset by confusion.

Ah so.

SANTA brought me and my brother the Artist II package with a Kempston mouse. Whoopie! But are there any GOOD games that are compatible with the Kempston mouse?

David Licence
Gorleston
Gt Yarmouth

● No. Well, not that I know of. And in the 16-bit world, where computers come with mice like hedgehogs come with fleas, most games are still written to be used with a joystick. Joysticks are a far better way to control games, it seems, whereas a mouse is a timid creature best left in the quiet world of pretty pictures.

So you're not missing out on anything.

WHAT'S the answer to this lot:
1 Can I write my own Rom routines that overwrite the normal Spectrum Rom?
2 Can I expand my Spectrum's memory to 640K, or will I have to change the CPU to a Z80B or Z80C?
3 Can I scrap single-letter entry and type in commands letter for letter?
4 Can I add RS232 or Midi ports to my Spectrum without taking it apart and without buying either of the units?

Damien Foggen
Stanley
County Durham

● Sitting down? Good. 1 No you can't. The Rom – Read Only Memory – chip is programmed when it's made by etching a pattern onto the chip's surface. This can't be changed without a roomful of equipment and an acid bath. You really don't want to know the details.

2 No again. Changing the CPU to another sort of Z80 won't help either – thay all address the same amount of memory. If you were very, very techy you could bolt on 640K or more of extra memory by adding switching circuits but it would be cheaper to buy a +2 or even a Sam.

3 Yes! There are a number of enhanced Basic programs about; one of the better ones is Beta Basic. Another good one is EX-Basic from One-Day Protection Systems 0228-35208. Most of them let you type things in full, if you must.

4 No. If you could, don't you think Sinclair would have done it? Or at least advertised it . . .

I'VE got a Granada/Sanyo TV monitor C14E54 and I'd like to connect it to the +3 VDU monitor socket. The Sanyo has a 76-pin socket (diagram enclosed).

Is there anything else I should know before connecting the two together?

D. C. Brown
Chatham
Kent

● Loads of people are asking about monitor-computer connections these days, as it seems that TV manufacturers are keen to bung the sockets on for all those wonderful (oh yeah?) satellite receivers, interactive CD video systems and so on.

Connect the following pins on the Spectrum to those on the monitor – 7 to 1, 6 to 2, 8 to 3, 4 to 4, 2 to 5 and 3 to 6. There's a diagram of the Spectrum socket on page 316 of the manual; with that and the appropriate bit of your monitor handbook any hi-fi or TV repair shop should be able to do you a lead.

In general, there's nothing else to worry about. It's not possible with the +3 (although it was with the +2) to connect it directly to the Video In socket of most video cassette recorders, or to any monitor with a composite video input. It will only work with RGB inputs, like yours.

MY first 48K Spectrum was bought in 1983. Since then, I've had it replaced twice, repaired and now I'm using a Spectrum +. Most of my troubles have involved games not loading.

The games all load on other people's computers, and typical symptoms include stange symbols and patterns on loading screens, or games never starting properly, or the computer going black and back to the copyright screen.

What is going on? Is it the tapes themselves?

Edward Hodson
Waterloo
Liverpool

●Nah. Classic case of dodgy tape recorder. What you've got is a cassette player that, while it might do justice to Bros or Celery Minnow, is just not up to the business of injecting bytes into your pooter. It could be too old, it could be dirty (see the reply to Khaled Khairey), it could have the dreaded Drive Belt Wobble, it might just be bored with Spectrum data tapes.

It's not actually worth trying to get the cheap tape decks mended unless you've got a particularly friendly fixer who'll do it for a fiver, but do check for build-up of dirt on the head (do music tapes sound muffled?) before consigning it to the bin.

This month we look at game design and Steve Marsden answers the question '3D or not 3D'

HOW

. . . SHOULD I REPRESENT THE GRAPHICS?

If you decide that plan or side view pictures aren't for you, the only choice available is the 3D. Or is it?

3D GAMES

3D Ant Attack, Knightlore, Alien 8, Quazatron, The Final Matrix, are all 3D games in a category which you could technically describe as — "Isometrically/Obliquely projected 3D graphical games". That means that the screen is filled with nice graphics that are drawn to look as though they are in 3D. The key to this system is that the sprites and blocks you see are in fact 2D sprites — they have to be because your television screen is flat. The innovation is that some genius thought that by drawing the sprite to look as if it was in 3D (Fig 1), then hey presto we have a 3D game. It is at this point that the genius described it wrongly — the result is not true 3D but more of a compromise, but this compromise has certainly produced some very good games in recent years. There are other types of 3D games which I will briefly mention although it is the type described above which we'll deal with first.

VECTOR GRAPHIC 3D GAMES

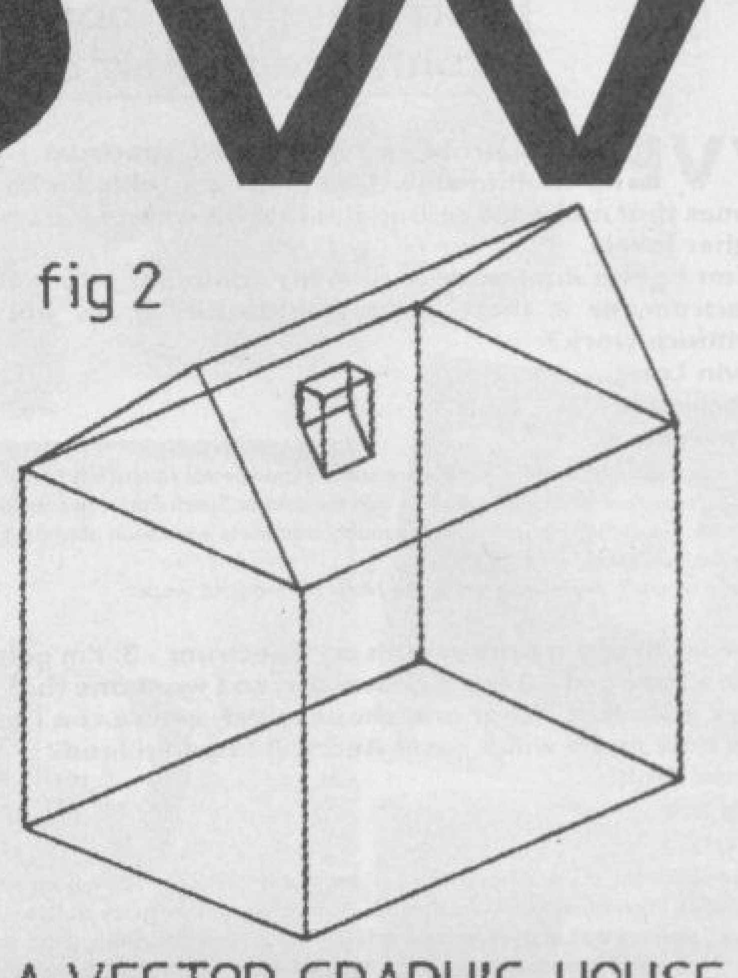
In this category, we have our objects made up of wire framed structures (Fig 2). This style lends itself to space games or games where the scale is very large with vast distances involved. Remember the games **Elite** and **Gyron?** Ironically, these games tend to be written by the mathematical genius type of programmer whose graphics capability is at the stick insect level — vector graphics are virtually stick drawings! If we 'fill-in' the space between the lines of a vector graphic, then we end up with a game like the recent *Freescape* series. Basically it is exactly the same as ordinary 3D vector graphics but rather than 'fresh air' between the lines we put different textures instead. At the end of the day, the more complex the programmer makes the 3D effect then the more the program will start making the processor groan at the seams and slow down the game.

Oh! I almost forgot, there is another semi-3D style which is worthy of a mention and that is the **Jack the Nipper** portrayal (Fig 3). When we see how the graphics type of 3D game is designed we will see that the games whether they be of the **Knightlore** or **Jack the Nipper** variety, have a lot in common.

HOW IT WORKS

Remember those horrible

fig 2



A VECTOR GRAPHIC HOUSE

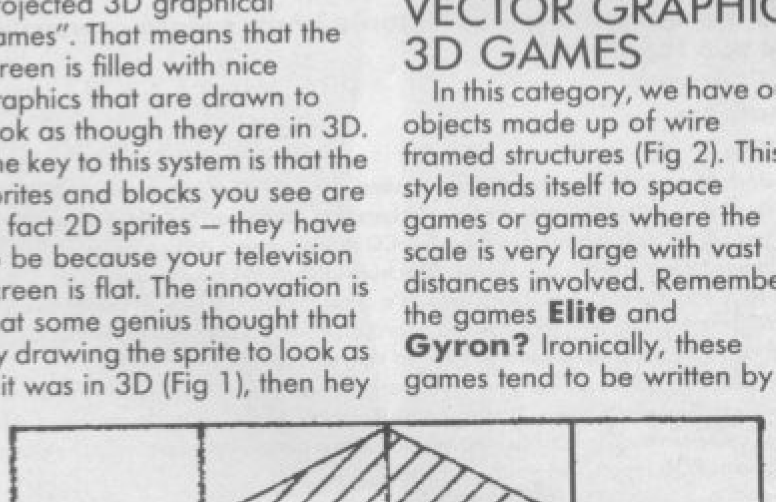


fig1

A 3D SPRITE DRAWN IN 2D

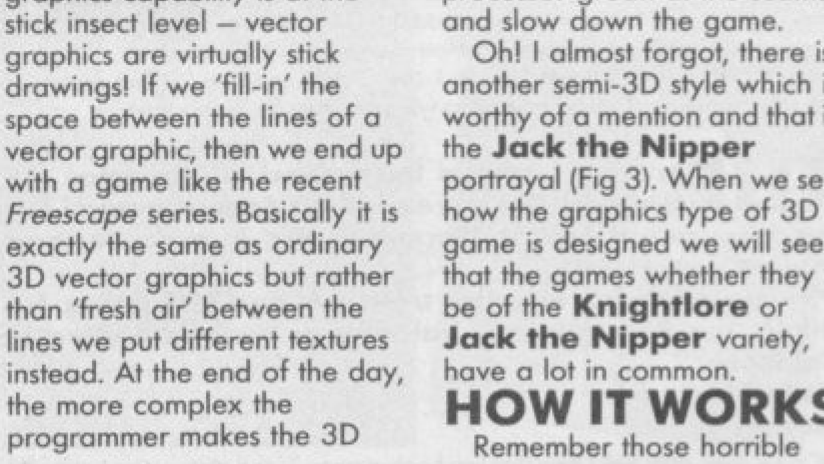


fig3

ANOTHER 3D STYLE

THE HELL!!!

games when the Spectrum first came out – circa 1983. The sprites flickered and they caused all kinds of problems when they overlapped. Once some bright spark started using 'Masked Sprites' in his games, the problems just dried up. Masked sprites have been described in this column before so I won't elaborate but it allows the sprites to pass over each other in a precise way without obliterating parts of background scenery or other sprites. Unfortunately there is not enough space to do a full scale 3D demo program (I don't think GT would like it!) What I have done instead, is to demonstrate how it works with a cardboard cut-out of a 3D system (Fig 4). For those of you

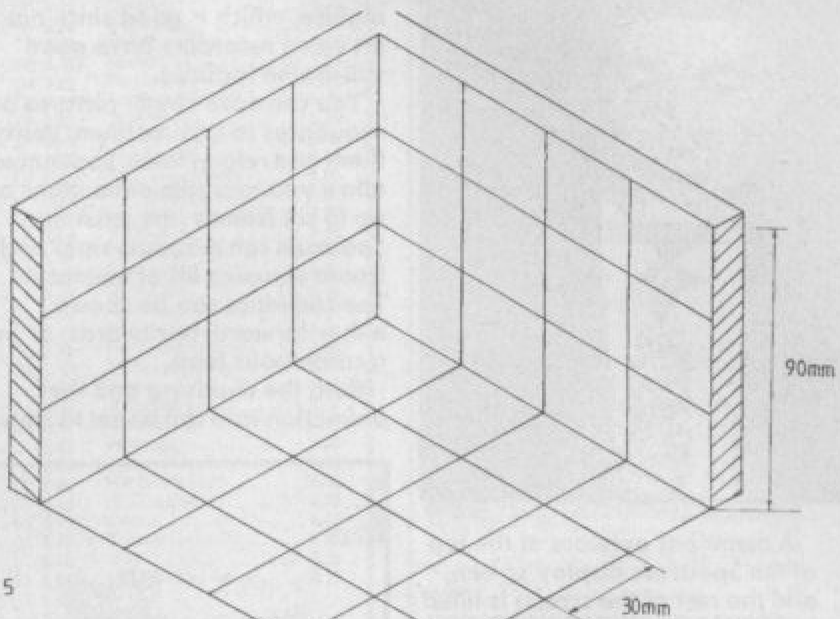


fig 5

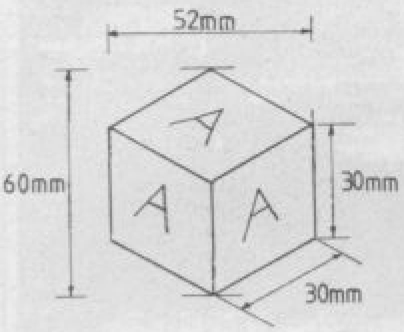


fig 4

CUT OUT 3 CUBES TO THESE DIMENSIONS AND MARK THEM A, B, C

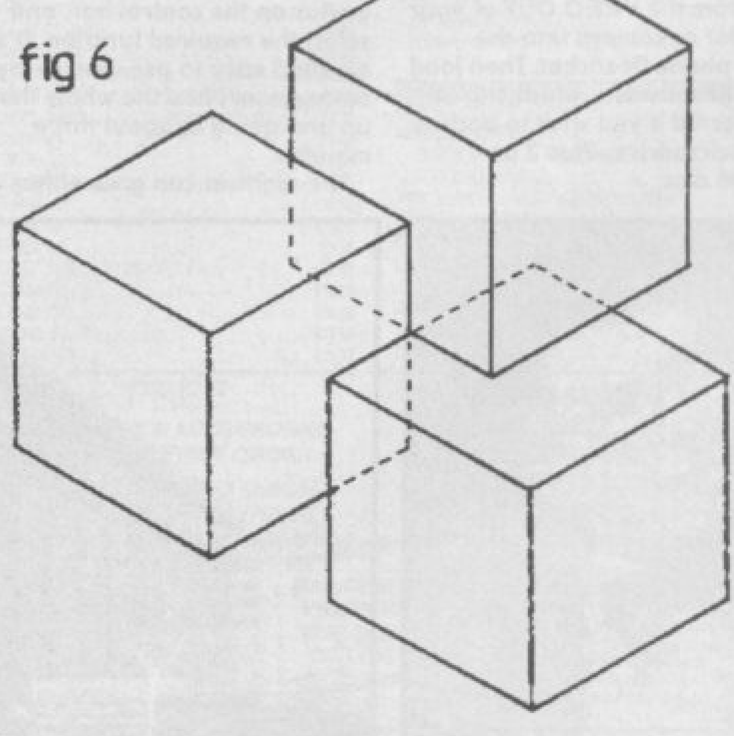
who watch *Blue Peter,* this should be a doddle – we don't need any sticky backed plastic though! Just copy the shapes shown onto cardboard or paper and cut out the shapes as shown. On a separate piece of paper draw a copy of figure 5 (using the dimensions shown). By doing this you have essentially got a background screen (Fig 5) and some block shaped sprites A, B, and C.

If you position the paper 'sprites' on the background drawing, a little juggling will make the whole scene look quite convincing as a 3D portrayal of a cubic room with 3 cubes at different positions within that room. Remember that the games mentioned previously had nicely drawn characters instead of cubes but the principle is the same – if you want to cut out 3D representations of something abstract like a Sinclair C5 for example, just draw it in isometric projection and cut it out. Try moving the cut-outs in various ways on the background – overlapping if you want. The word 'overlapping' now brings me to an important point with this form of 3D.

Some readers of this article may have heard of the artist who was famous for his abstract three dimensional drawings which depicted impossible situations. The man was called Escher and he undoubtedly caused a stir with his style of art (Sorry for this lecture. – GT). Water would flow downhill only to appear to end up back at the top of the drawing but having travelled downhill all the way round the drawing. This was clever stuff to look at but obviously the pictures were just a kind of optical illusion. Getting back to our 3D model, refer to figure 6 to see a valid case where the three cardboard cut outs each overlap the other in a sort of interlocking layout. There is nothing peculiar about this way of arranging them and it is quite easily achieved in the real world. Here is the dilemma. A 3D computer program achieves its 3D overlapping by drawing the sprites further away first and sprites progressively nearer on top of th eothers in a 'back to front' system. This creates the realism of things going behind walls etc. The normal way the computer works this out is by doing a 'bubble sort' type of action on each individual sprite X, Y, and Z co-ordinates so that the sprite to be drawn first is the one deepest into our scene. When our sprites are to be positioned as in the interlocking figure 6 way, the sort routine would get locked. The routine would determine that each of the 3 sprites had a valid right to be drawn first and effectively the sort routine could not sort them into a depth order because they are all the same (to the routine at least).

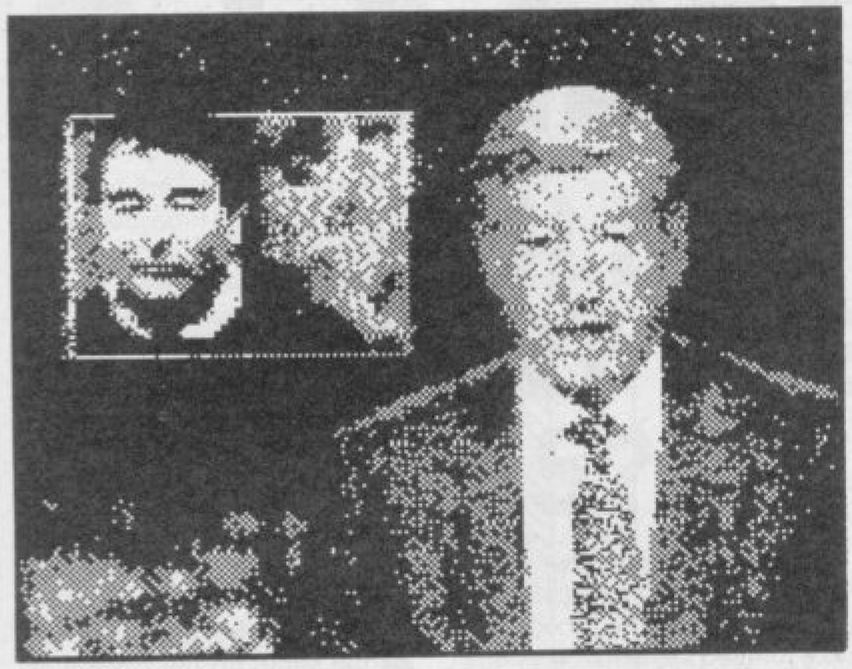
There is no easy solution to this problem and the cure we adopted in **Final Matrix** was to prevent the sort routine getting locked in the cage where the sprites were at the same point on the scene. Having said that, the problem is very difficult to set up and usually if it does occur it happens so quickly and has gone before you know it. Right at the start I said that these games are not true 3D but something else. The something else is a very convincing illusion of 3D.

fig 6



EACH BLOCK OVERLAPPING THE OTHER

DIGITAL NEWS



It's not often we look at new bits of hardware for the Spectrum for the jolly good reason that there are few new ones appearing. Even this goodie, the Rombo VIDI video digitiser, isn't strictly speaking NEW as such, but the operating software has been extensively revised and upgraded, by an enthusiastic owner of the original version, so it's worth a second eyeball.

The function of a video digitiser is to take a picture signal from a video recorder or camera, and shove it into your computer's memory in such a way that the image can be displayed and manipulated on screen. In the case of the VIDI, the connections are simple; plug the little black box into the user port of the Spectrum (any Spectrum), and a lead from the VIDEO OUT of your recorder or camera into the VIDI's phone IN socket. Then load the VIDI software, which can be transferred if you wish to backup tape, microdrive, Plus 3 or Disciple disc.

A menu bar appears at the top of the Spectrum display screen, and the rest of the screen is filled by a digitised image of whatever signal is being output by your video recorder or camera. It's magic!

The image is in black and white, of course, since only very expensive digitisers can create a colour display. However, you can select any other combination of paper, ink and border colours if you prefer. Also, by pressing the spacebar you can switch on a SHADE option which introduces a more graduated toning. You can also adjust a signal level knob on the side of the VIDI, which controls the overall brightness/contrast.

The spacebar and enter key are used to flip through a series of menus on the control bar, and select the required function. It's all dead easy to use, and to my amazement I had the whole thing up and going in about three minutes.

The digitiser can grab either single frames, or a sequence at a rate of abouit twelve per second, which is slower than real-time but which gives a fairly "live" feel. You don't need a still frame to digitise, which is good since not all video recorders have good still-frame facilities.

You can save single pictures or sequences to any medium, verify them and reload later. Sequences allow you to create animations of up to six frames (the most the Spectrum can manage, since each frame occupies 8K of memory). The sequence can be shown either forward, backwards, or in a continuous loop.

Both the digitising and the animation rate can be set to slow, medium or fast, which allows you to create some interesting slow and fast-motion effects. A complete sequence with animation parameters can be saved as a single file. These files contain a small machine code routine which allows you to incorporate the animations in your own programs, and alter the speed and direction settings from Basic. Experienced machine-code programmers should be able to write their own VIDI applications using the technical data given in the brief photocopied manual.

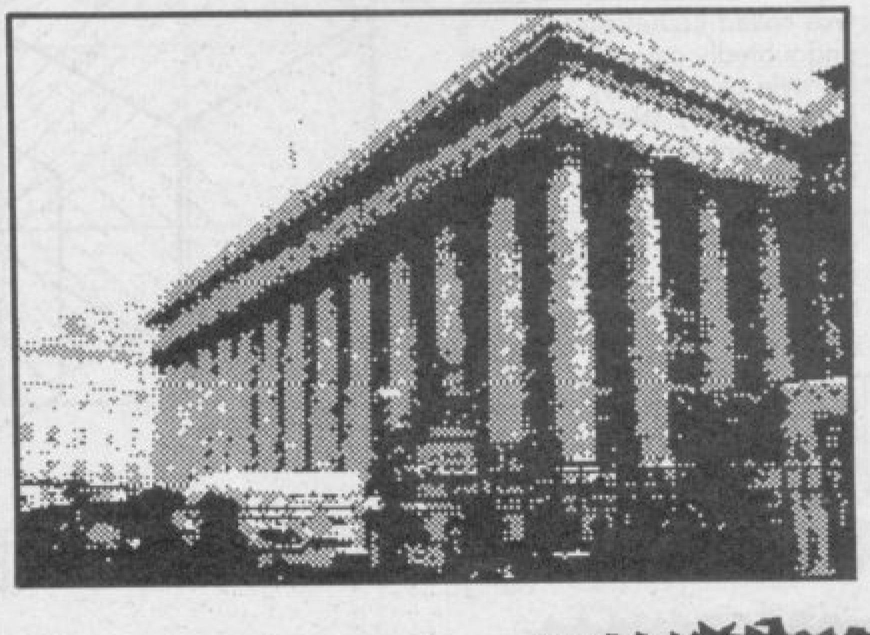
Since VIDI saves pictures in conventional Spectrum SCREEN$ format, you can print them out directly from the program, or load them ito most graphics packages for further editing, colouring and manipulation.

For the price of four full-price games VIDI should give you hours of enjoyment. Owners of the original version can upgrade their software for £1.99.

Product: ***VIDI video digitiser.***
Supplier: ***ROMBO, 107 Raeburn Rigg, Livingston, West Lothian, Scotland EH54 8PH. Tel 0506 39046.***
Price: ***£34.95.***









MEGASAVE FANTASTIC SAVINGS

Title	Disk	Price
Afterburner		6.25
Airbourne Ranger	D1	6.99
Apache Gunship	D4	6.95
Arkanoid II	D1	5.25
Alien Syndrome		5.95
Action Force II	D1	5.50
Buggy Boy	D1	5.50
Boot Camp 19	D1	6.45
Bard's Tale		6.95
Bionic Commandos	D1	6.00
Black Tiger	D1	6.00
Barbarian II	D2	6.50
Butcher Hill	D1	5.50
Batman II	D1	5.95
Bobby Yazz Show	D1	5.50
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HARD DRIVING SPECIAL

COIN

What? Another ATEI Show? Yup – it's January and anybody who's anybody in the Amusement trade is winging their way along to Olympia to get a first glimpse of all the new machines to hit Europe this year.



This is the one everybody is going to be playing in the Spring of this year – assuming Atari can make enough to satisfy the astonishing demand – because **Hard Drivin'** is the world's first coin-operated driving simulator which really delivers anything near the true feel of driving a high performance car. Now don't get me wrong – there are plenty of great driving games around at the moment, and I confess it is still a personal ambition of mine to get the high score on every single **Final Lap** unit in the country. But from the moment you sit in the compact **Drivin'** unit, you notice something is different. Very different.

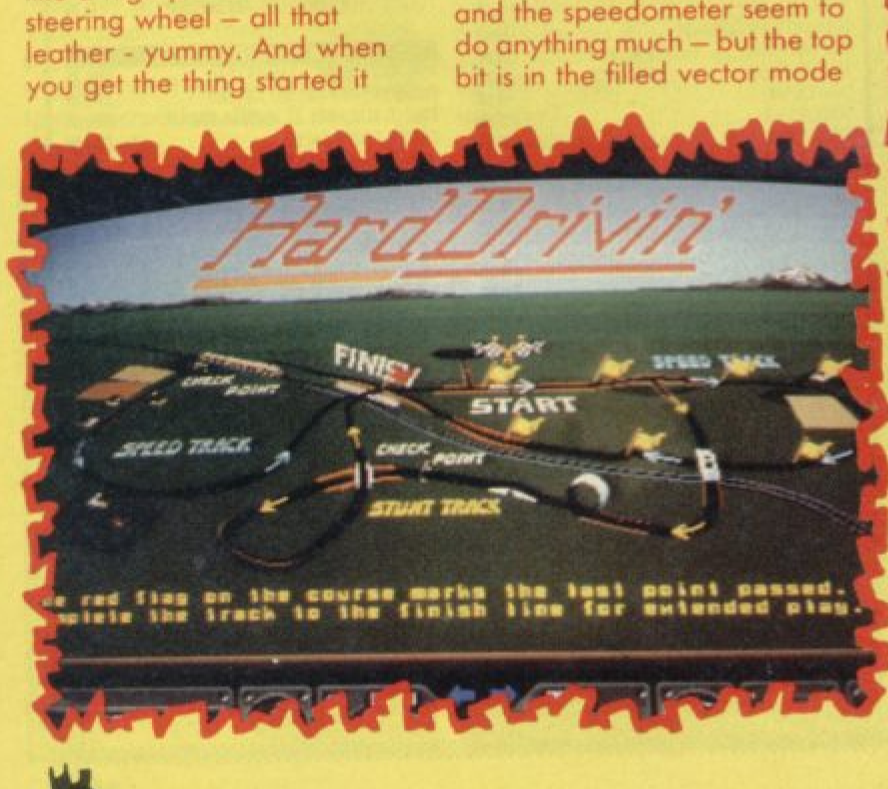
Three pedals. Accelerator, brake ... AND CLUTCH? What the hell is a clutch doing in a driving game? About the same as what the five speed gear lever is doing on the right of the unit I suppose. Realism. The steering wheel is odd too – it looks like a high performance car steering wheel ... it feels like a high performance car steering wheel – all that leather - yummy. And when you get the thing started it writhes around in your hand like a high performance car steering wheel. But we're getting a bit ahead of ourselves here, because perhaps the greatest surprise of all is that the main playing display is made up of ... filled vectors.

Granted, you have normal car type gauges on the bottom third or so of the screen although only the rev counter and the speedometer seem to do anything much – but the top bit is in the filled vector mode we have all come to know and love in games like **Carrier Command. Elite 16-Bit, Starglider II** etc.

Steps back in amazement, large stampede of people going to foots of stairs, etc! This must be the first time ever that the techniques developed on home micros have found themselves on coin-op. And how! Objects; other cars, lorries, trains, houses – even cows; are well drawn, made up of many, many, 3-D polygons. It's the number of these polygons on screen at once that determines the speed of the refresh rate – that's how many times the screen is updated per second. In **Hard Drivin'** there are serious numbers of polygons about, and yet the speed of the thing is still astonishing. All this even before you put the money in the slot!!

Having said goodbye to the dosh – the first decision you have to make is whether to go for automatic gears (no use of the clutch or the stick whatsoever) or go for full manual control. Need I say what real video heroes should





OPS



Naturally **SU** were there and monopolised the world's leading car simulator – **Hard Drivin'** from Atari Games. 0-60 in 5 seconds and more in this month's exciting instalments . . .

choose?

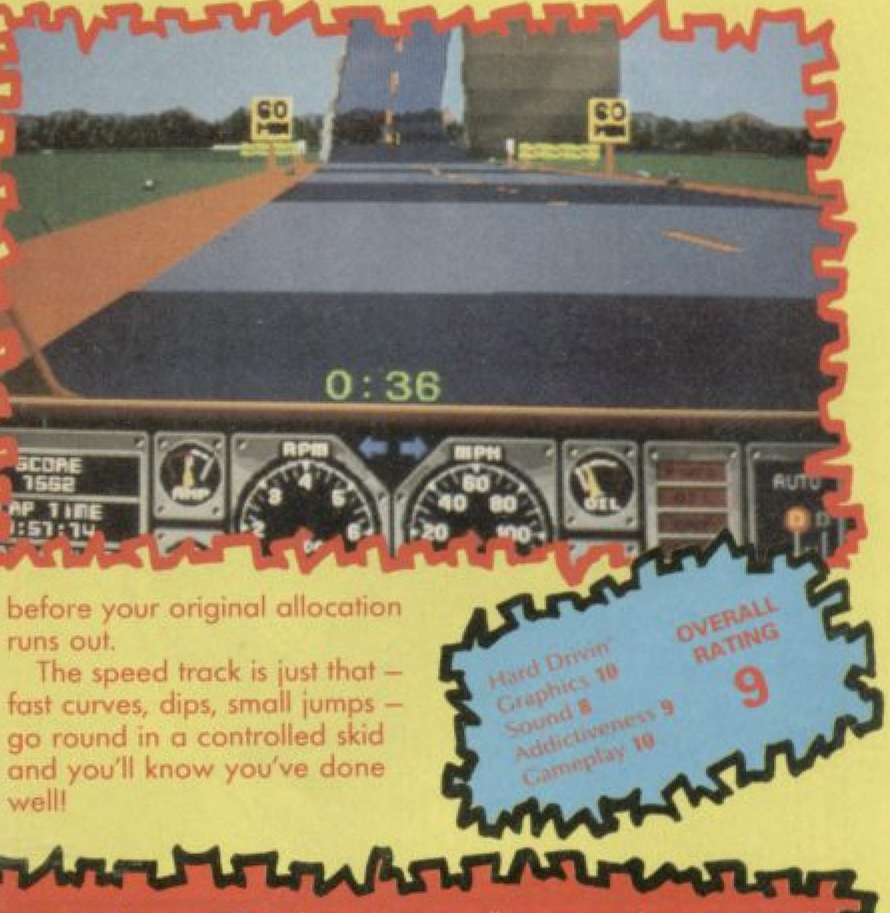
Then you depress the clutch, turn the key in the ignition (nice detail!) and the engine bursts into sampled enging-turning over sounds. Catch it with a tap on the throttle (that's the one on the right, for the under fives) – raise the revs to around six thou' rpm (hear that finely turned hand crafted engine growl), select 1st gear, then drop that clutch and . . . HEY!!! Heavy wheelspin, man!!! The 1 min 30 timer is already ticking away so fight to control the steering (mind the other cars on your right) keep the revs rrreally high and work your way up through the gears.

Foot hard down, you can make 30 by the time you come to a fork in the road. Straight on the speed track. Hard right, the stunt track. Why not try the stunts?

Swing the wheel right – sail past the advisory 40 mph speed limit sign – and quicky find yourself off road, sliding sideways towards a nicely contructed barn and a genuine Milton Keynes stationary cow. Feel the steering wheel fight back!!! Wow!

Point 1 – play **Hard Drivin'** like it was a racing game and you'll lose very quickly. Point 2 – change down, apply opposite lock, step on the gas like crazy and you just might recover such a mistake . . . just like a real car.

The stunt track contains three major tests – all with advisory speed limits you should stick to plus or minus 10%. First a jump. Go fast and you'll over rotate and hit nose down, fatally. (When a fatal crash occurs, you'll get an external birds eye view action replay of the event impressive but ego crushing). Go slow – and you simply don't make it. Then there's the loop . . . yes a loop a.k.a. Matchbox Cars, roller coasters, etc. Going through this is a wonderful, if not stomach-churning experience! Finally, a banked curve. All this time you'll be overtaking other cars – and avoiding those coming in the opposite direction. And don't forget to drive on the right. Extra time is added for making checkpoints



before your original allocation runs out.

The speed track is just that – fast curves, dips, small jumps – go round in a controlled skid and you'll know you've done well!

Hard Drivin' is astonishing both in terms of realism and sheer technical achievement – with the sole reservation that once you get good at it, the slight lack of variety might give the game a short playing life – **Hard Drivin'** has got to be an early contender for game of the year, 1989. Go play it now!!!

Hard Drivin'
Graphics **10**
Sound **8**
Addictiveness **9**
Gameplay **10**

OVERALL RATING **9**

Think of the whole of the PC Show, but just devoted to coin-ops and the like. Have I gone to heaven and died or what? Everything on freeplay as well. Yes sir, you were listening correctly. Free... gratis. No exchange of money or favour. No consideration involved whatsoever. A gameplayer's dream.

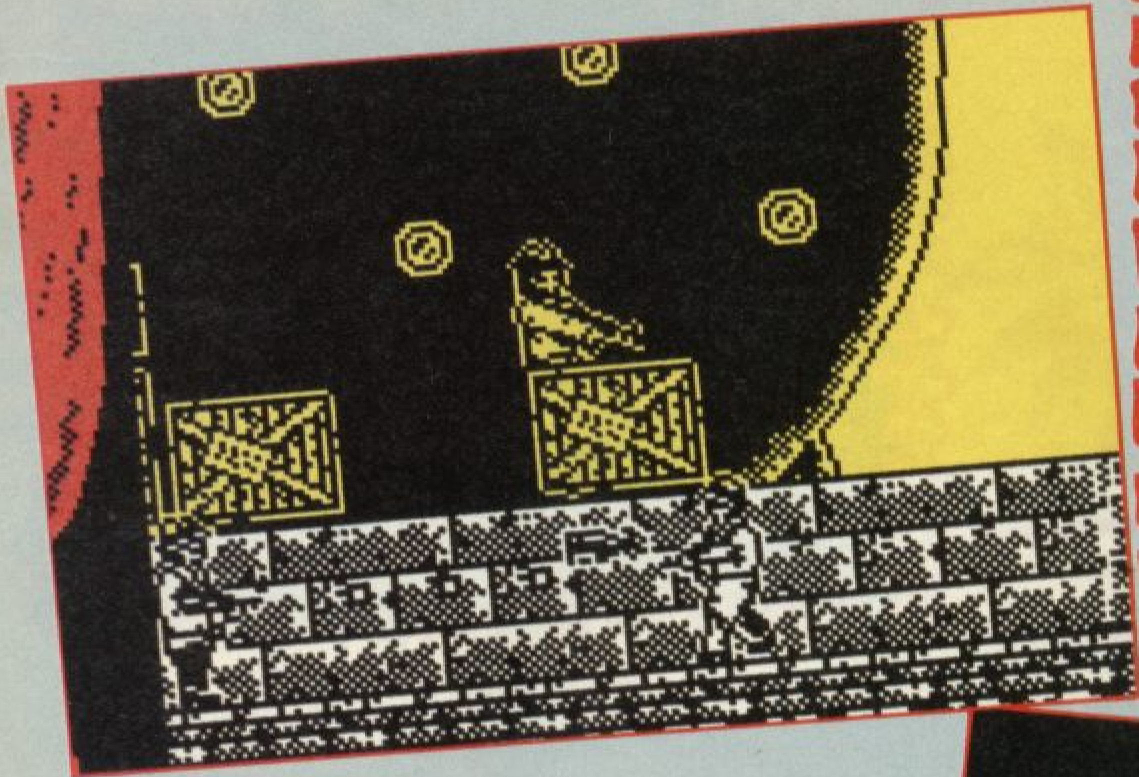
All the biggies were there – in force even. Sega, with, of course **Power Drift** (in fact, one stand had linked two upright versions together for two player action) but the most interesting thing was a game in development – a four player maze game set in a D&D environment where each player has their own independant view of the maze. Called **Last Survivor**, we'll be reviewing it as soon as we can.

Atari Games had the success of the show with **Hard Drivin'**, but there was another game that we hadn't expected seeing. **Tetris** – the computer coin-op. the game that got an **SU** classic finally makes the big time. We have friends in high places you know.

Konami was a bit disappointing – with the follow-up to **Chase HQ, Hot Chase**, being a let-down. But Taito was making no mistake with **Operation Wolf** (the replay), that is **Operation Thunderbolt**. Two player action, and things scrolling towards you, as well as horizontally.

Finally, Williams, makers of that classic **Defender**, who have been out of the coin-op market for some time while concentrating on pinball, have made a dramatic comeback with **NARC**.

With special fabby high res graphics, and a very worthy anti drugs theme, **NARC** is a fine beat-'em up which, hopefully, marks a return of Williams as an arcade force.





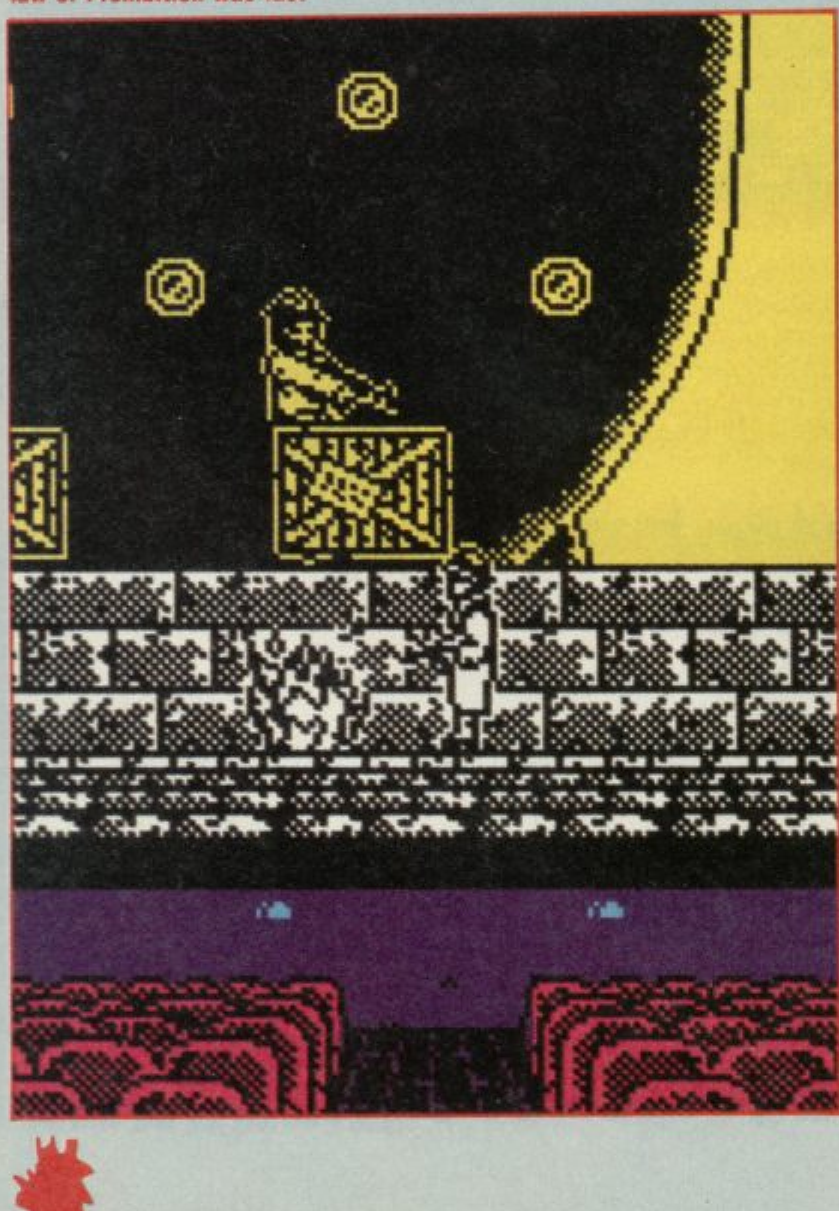
CHICAGO 30's

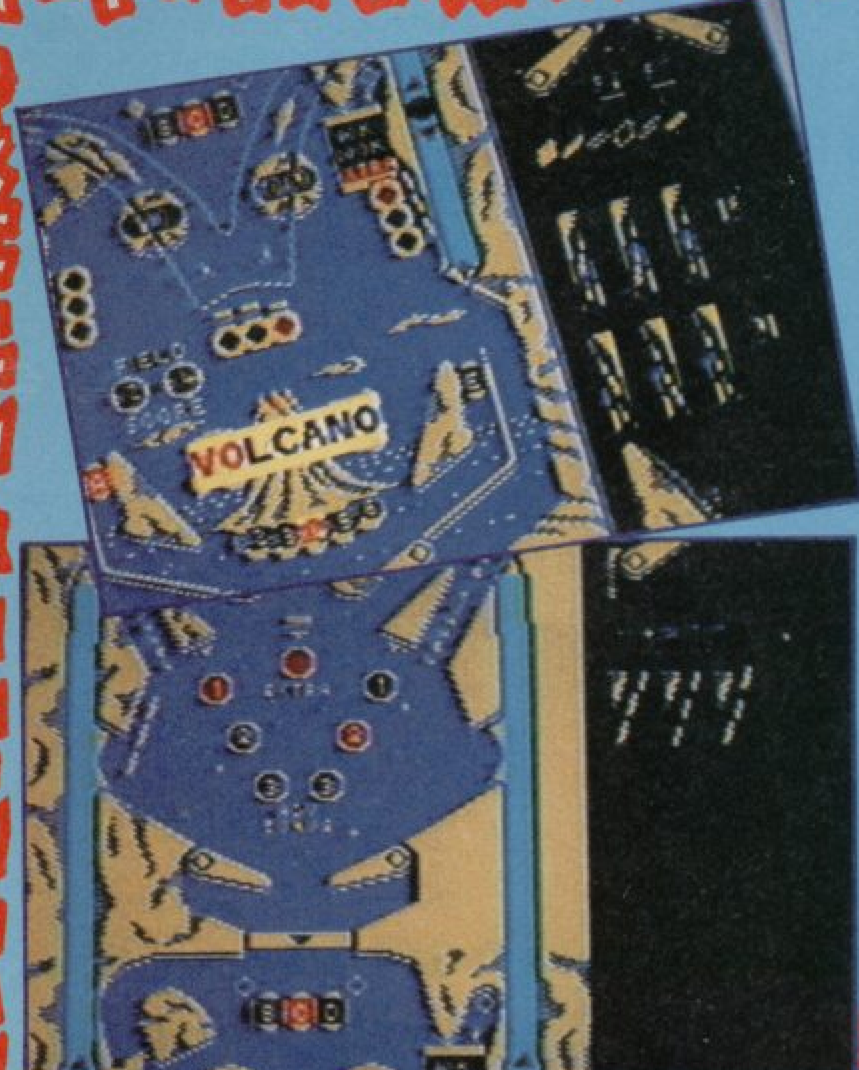
Remember The Untouchables, **the story about Chicago, prohibition, gangsters and Elliot Ness and his team of crimebusters which Ocean are shortly to release? Well, forget all about it, 'cos here comes** Chicago 30's **from US Gold, a story of gangsters, prohibition and "Detective Eliot". And they say there aren't any original ideas around any more . . .**

Chicago in the 1930's was a tough old place. Officials were bribed, bullied and murdered, the law of Prohibition was fast becoming a farce. The town was riddled with corruption. One man, Elliot Ness, set up a team of gangbustin' do-gooders who were beyond bribery – they were untouchable.

You'll have to negotiate four action-packed levels - the port, the city outskirts, the city centre and the warehouse in your quest to win the battle of the bottle and break the gangsters' vice-like grip on the city.

Streetdate: March.
Price: £8.95





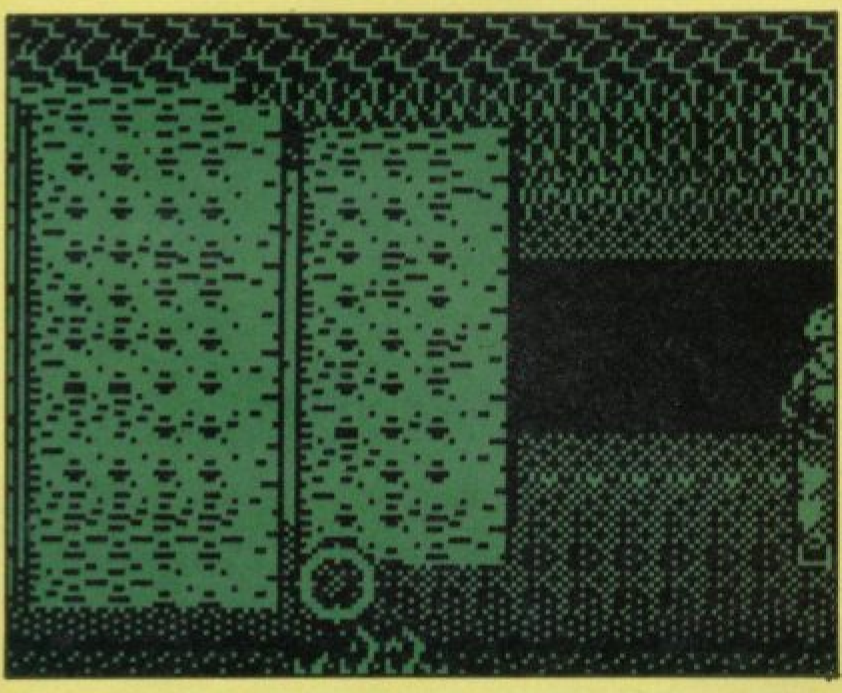
BUTCHER HILL

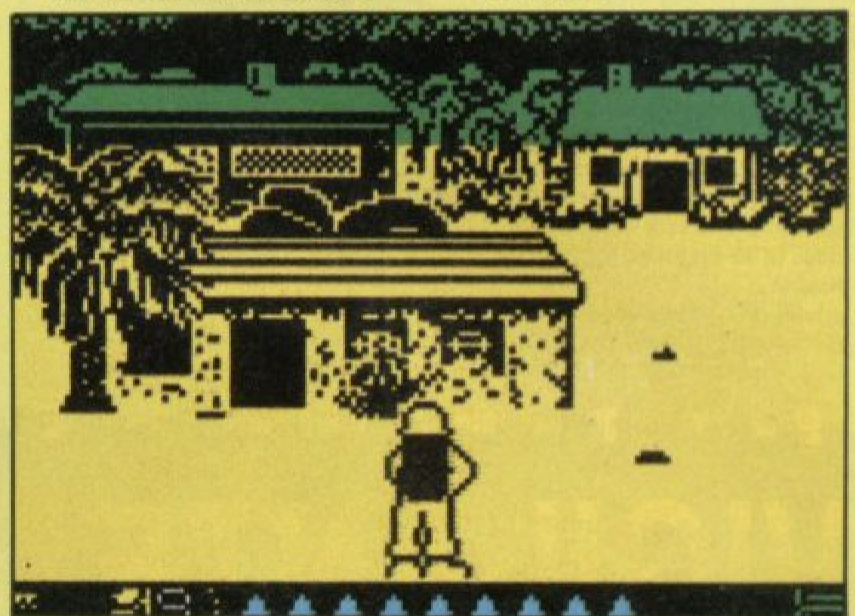


At a time that all the major Vietnam war movies are on sale for £9.99 on video and any hype that existed has long since retreated up the back passages of marketing executives, maybe Gremlin are being a tad too late with the jungle warfare epic, Butcher Hill. **A three parter, it consists of a treacherous boat race along a dangerous Vietnamese river, a quick race about in t' woods shooting the enemy and then a nice bit of shooting and grenading an innocent Vietnamese village.**

It all looks fairly 'seen it before' and it doesn't seem like it's going to be one of the bigger releases this year. All together now, 'People say I'm the life of the paa-har-ty, 'cause I tell a joke or twoooo . . .

Streetdate: March.
Price: £8.95

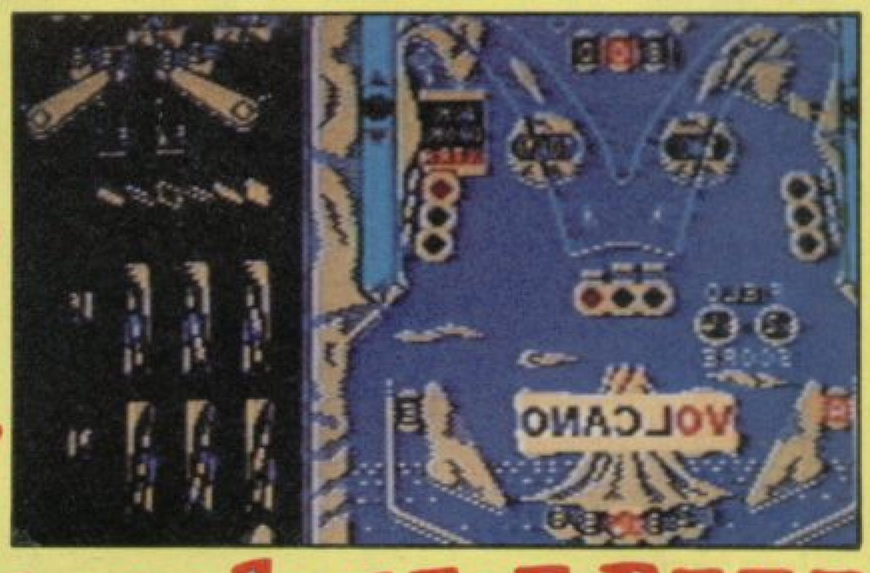




TIME SCANNER

Pinball alert! They're having a revival in the arcades and Activision are still working on the version of the coin op of the silver-ball olympic that is pin-ball. We previewed Timescanner **aeons ago, but it still looks like the boys at Activision are working on the inertia effects of the ball (this was the reason for the first non-appearance of the game after it was promised so long ago). We are, however promised that it will arrive very soon indeed. Mmm.**

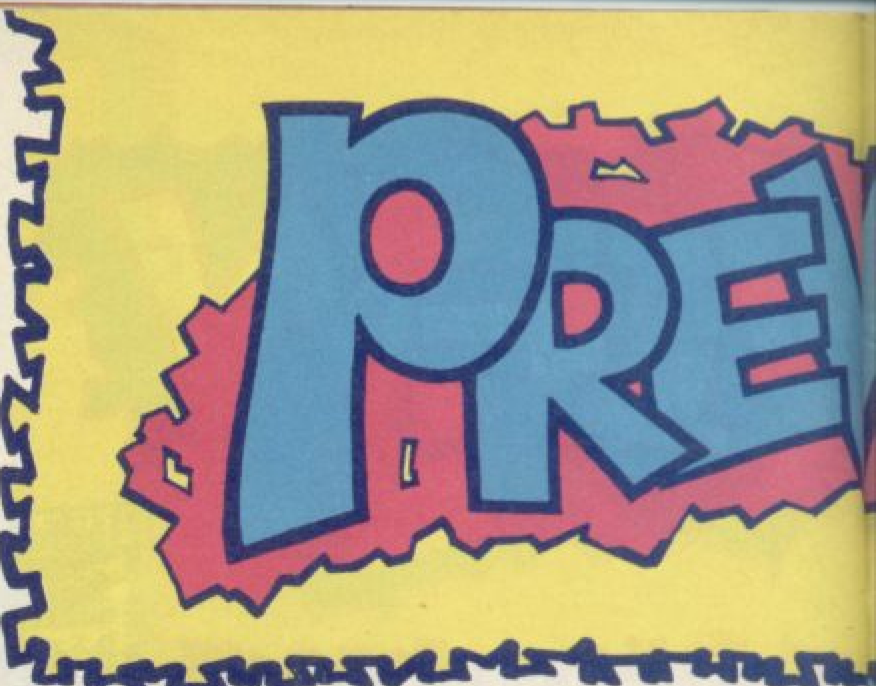
Streetdate: March
Price: £8.95











HAMSTER ATTACK

"My God, Professor! Look out for that big one! Aaaaarrk! It's coming for me. All teeth and fur and little pointy nose! What a horrible nibbly death. Eeeeeeeek!"

Heaven only knows what Code Masters is playing at. Teaser advertising they call it. They sent us this book on hamsters y'see, along with a slip saying that we had to read it very carefully in order to be prepared for their next release.

Lord only knows what it will be. Advanced Hamster Simulator? Ninja Hamsters at the End of Time? **We're all baffled (though not especially fascinated). So in the meantime, we've taken some prime quotes for your delectation.**

"Mealworms, cheese and toast are all tasty treats, but should be given only occasionally." Urk. No thank you!

"Never eat or drink while playing with a hamster." In case you mix them up and end up like Freddie Starr.

"Only pick up hamsters this way . . .' By the ears ". . . when it has become used to being handled."

Streetdate: March.
Price: £2.99



VIGILANTE

So. If it's tough on the streets, and even tougher on the Underground, what do you do about it? Take the law into your own hands in a Cliff Bronson/Sylvester J Eastwood-style kung-fu massacre? Or trust to the appointed guardians of law and order to restore the status quo as is their time-honoured function?

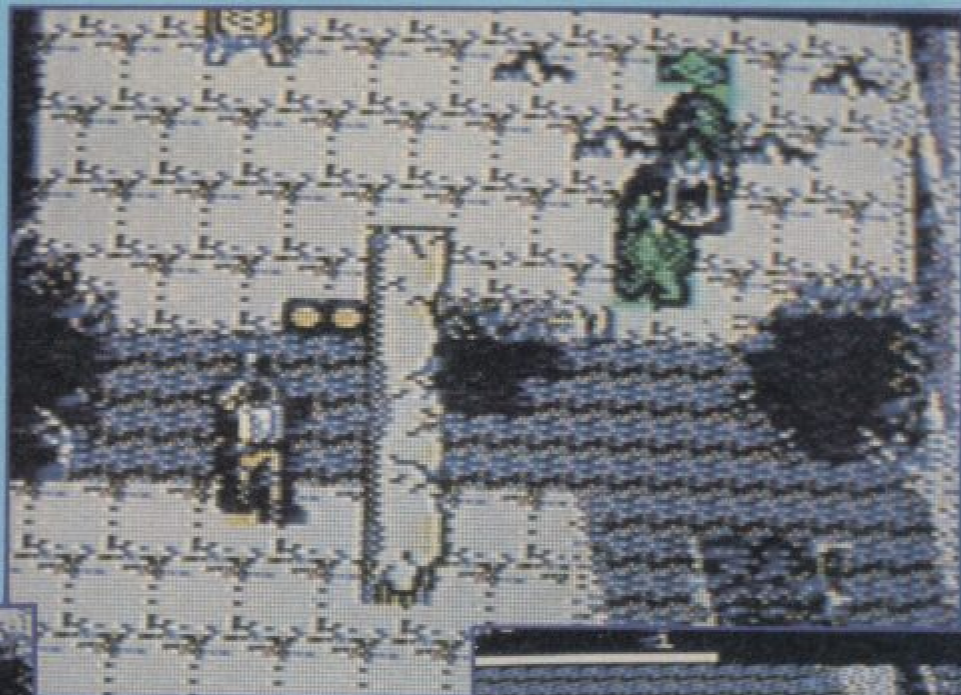
Well, according to the forthcoming game Vigilante **it's the former. This latest coin-op conversion is very** Kung-Fu Master **and** Target Renegade**, so don't expect any novelty-style heart-stopping shocks. Still, don't look bad as this shot shows, so maybe a bit more martial arts mayhem on the way from US Gold.**
Streetdate: March
Price: £8.95

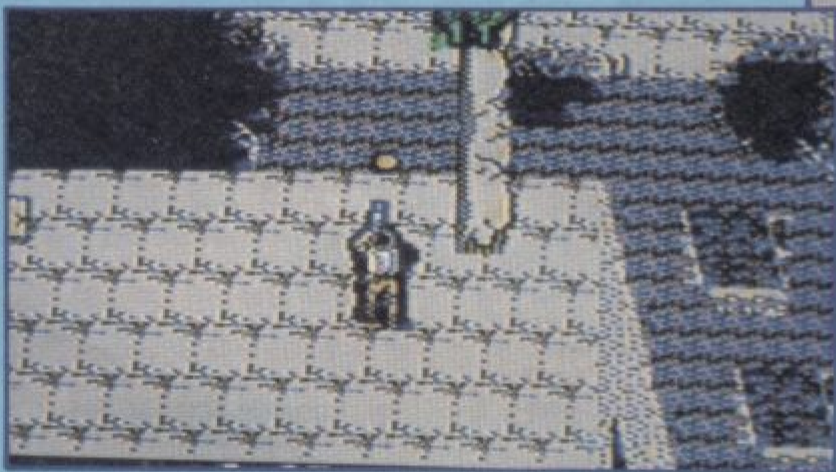






VIEW





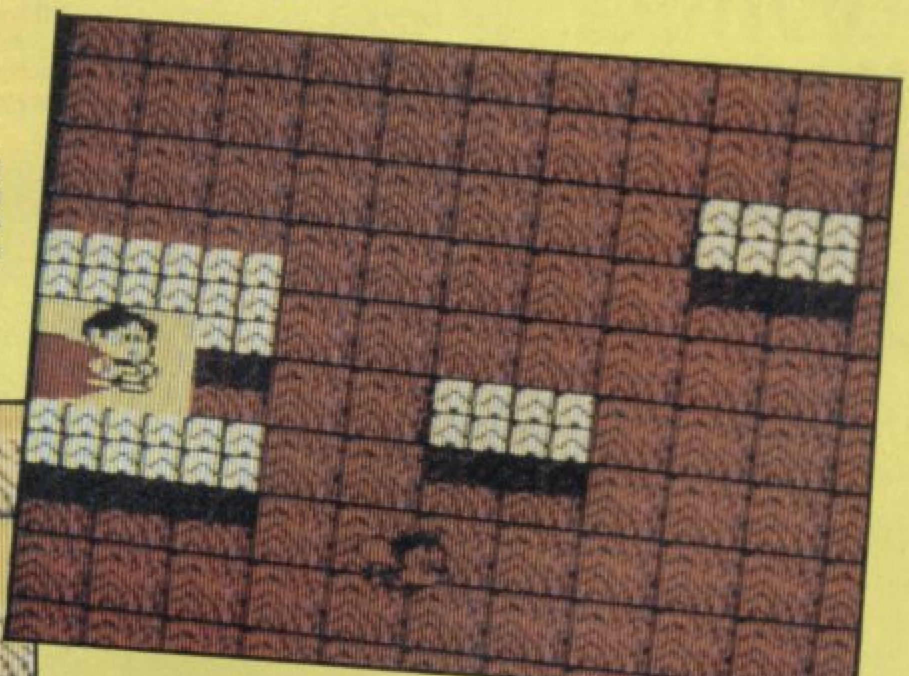
THE REAL GHOSTBUSTERS

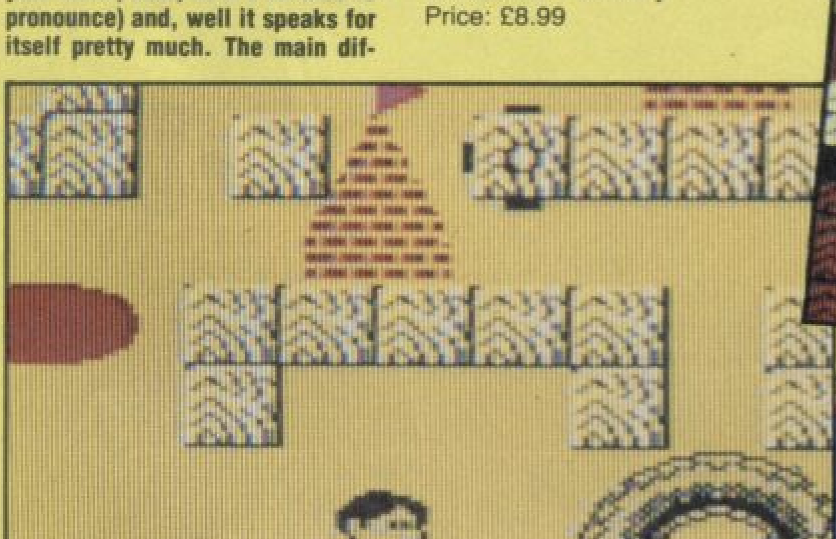
No information as yet, but these are screenshots for The Real Ghostbusters, **soon to appear from Activision. Next!**
Streetdate: March
Price: £8.95

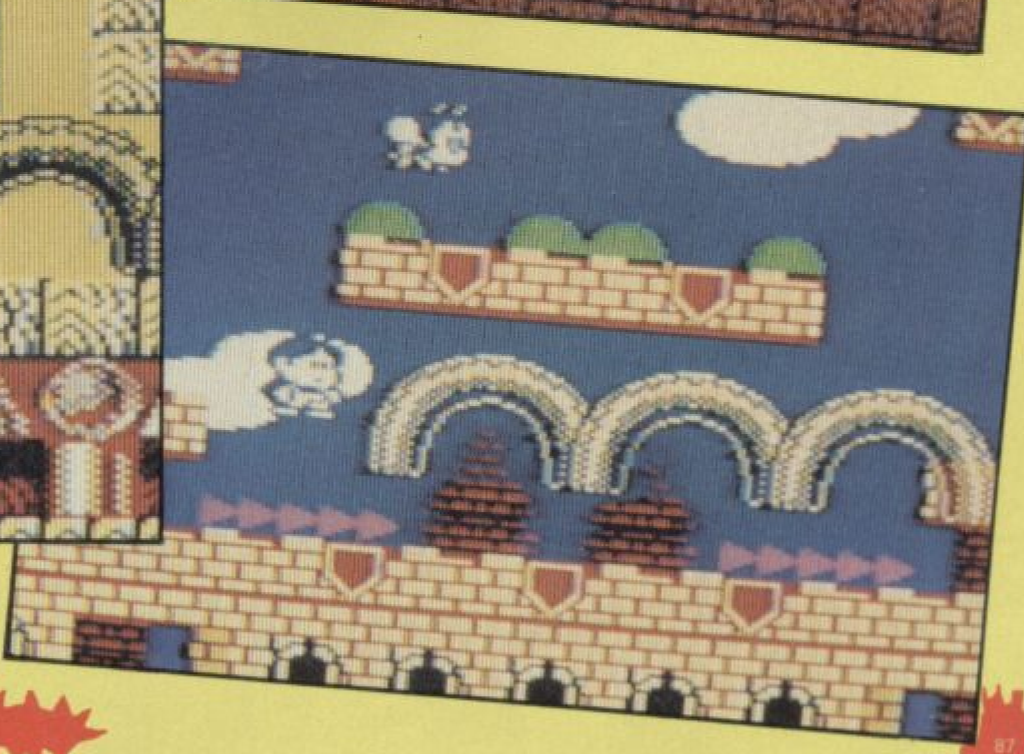


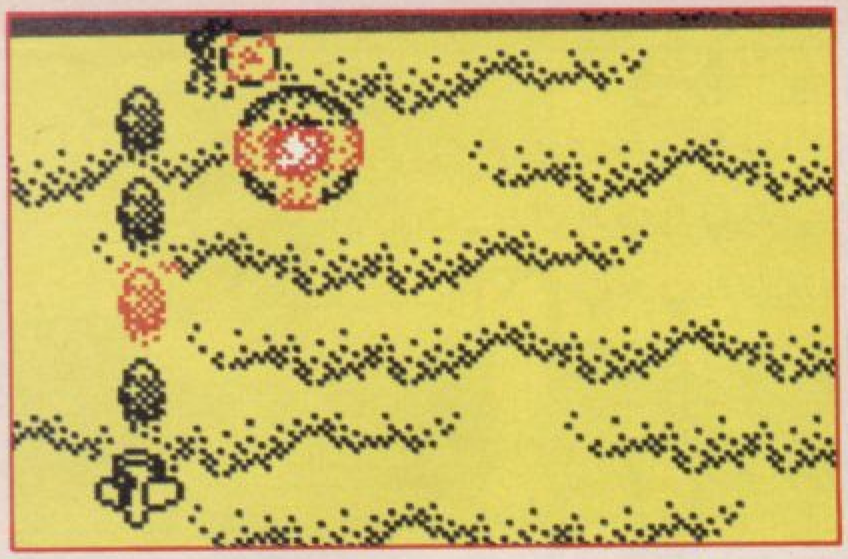
RAINBOW ISLAND

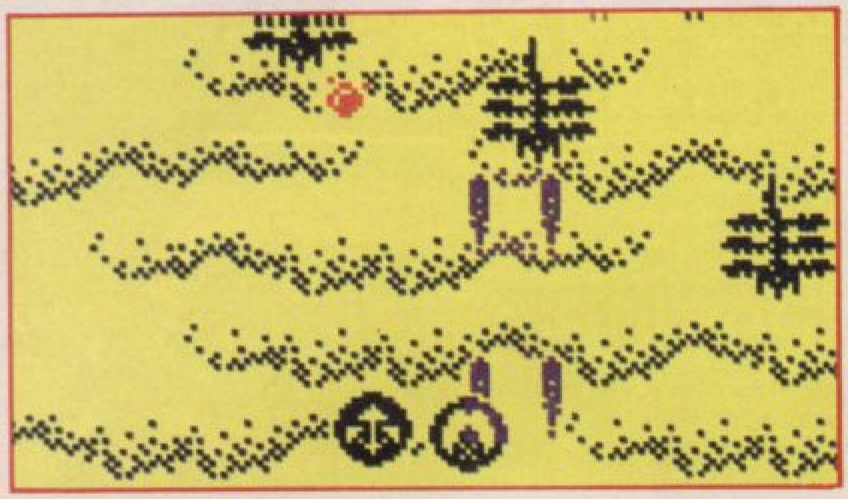
Here are some early screenshots of the forthcoming sequel to Bubble Bobble, Rainbow Island. **It's being programmed by Graftgold (can you please change your name, lads, as it's an arse to pronounce) and, well it speaks for itself pretty much. The main difference is that instead of flipping screens, it's a vertically scrolling affair. Take a look at the pictures and wait 'til next month for a review.**
Streetdate: February
Price: £8.99













GEMINI WING

My, those Sales Curve people are busy these days. Three whole solid games in production at the moment, along with another three in the pipeline. Phew, my old luv a duck, up the old Kent Road, I love London town and I was at Aunt Viola's funeral. The first of all these projects to see the light of day is a conversion of that fabby wonderful Gemini Wing.

For those of you who haven't already guessed by taking a quick sneaky look at the screens dotted about this (probably yellow) layout, GW bears more than a passing resemblance to that hoary old chestnut, 1943. I am informed that the major difference is that it's organic. What that means is that you get to fly your tiny little twin engine bubble plane over seven super souraway squishy sexy levels of innards and entrails blazing away at all the airborne and organicborne assailants, and there are a lot of them.

As usual, no shoot-'em-up is complete without the odd bit of progressive weaponry. What you can collect now are things like little balls that hang behind you, firing when you fire, as well as things like spread-fire.

So what else have Sales Curve got happening this side of summer? Well, Shinobi, a cross between a karate game and Rolling Thunder, should be making an appearance soon along with Silkworm, a two player shoot-'em-up in which one plays a helicopter and the other plays a jeep. Teamwork is all important.

Once that little trio have appeared, work'll start on the 8 bit conversions of Continental Circus, Ninja Warrior and vertical scrolling Ikari Warriors rip-off, Time Warriors.

Streetdate: April.
Price: £9.95

OBLITERATOR

Remember **Barbarian**? No, not the hack and slash two player beat-'em-up from Palace, the arcade adventure from Psygnosis, released by Melbourne House not so long ago. **Obliterator** is the official follow up and magically (opo-ee-oo) transports you from the barbarian caverns of the predecessor to a huge alien space craft. You are now the last of the Obliterators, and the destruction of the ship and the safety of mankind lies in your hands.

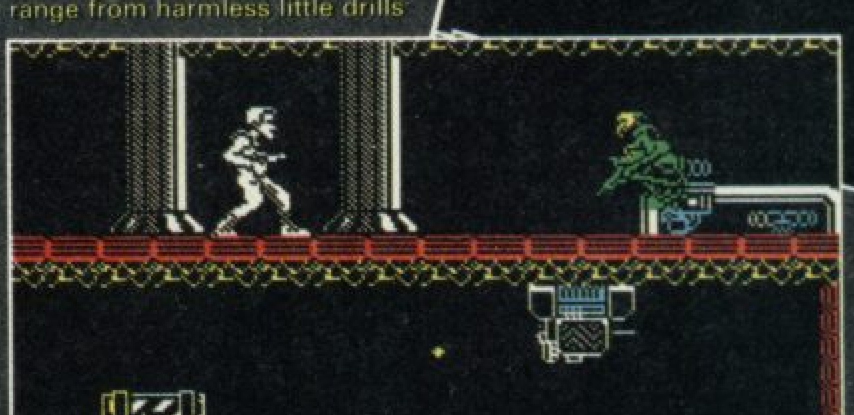
Your general and basic aim is to destroy the ship and escape with your life. Well, it'd be a bit pointless escaping without it wouldn't it? To do that, you first have to find and remove four separate components. One to disable the plasma drive, one to disable the shields, one to disable the main weapons system and one to shut down the computers. The final piece you have to find is the shuttle activation datapack so that you can get the shuttle out of there. Of course, you have to find the shuttle.

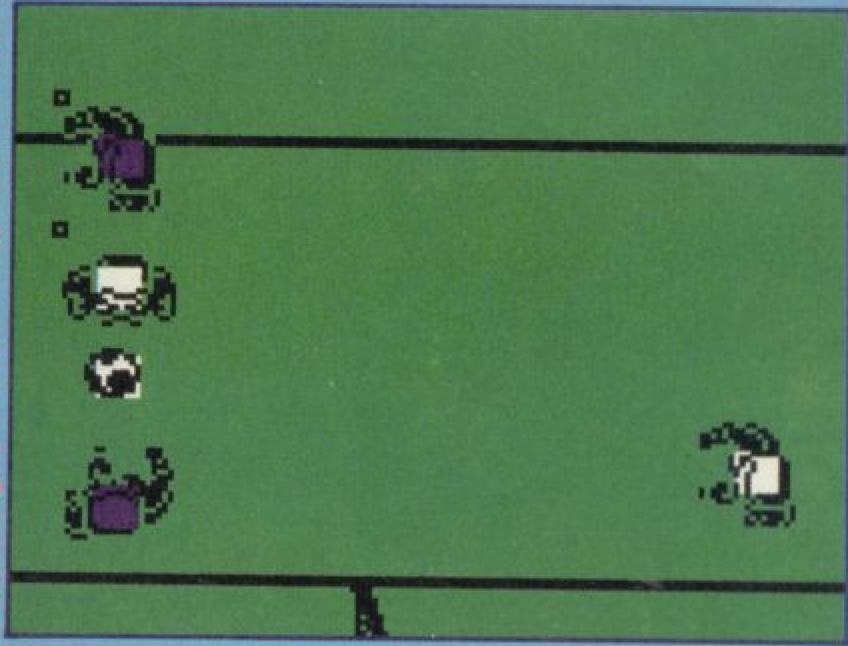
In keeping with the original, **Obliterator** carries basically the same control method as **Barbarian**. Left and right on the joystick make the character run in that particularly direction if he can. Up and down, however, causes a highlight to travel across a bar of icons at the bottom of the screen. Fire activates the currently selected icon. Pressing space puts you through to a sub menu which handles the basic manipulation of weapons (which one is currently activated) as well as giving you your score and energy level.

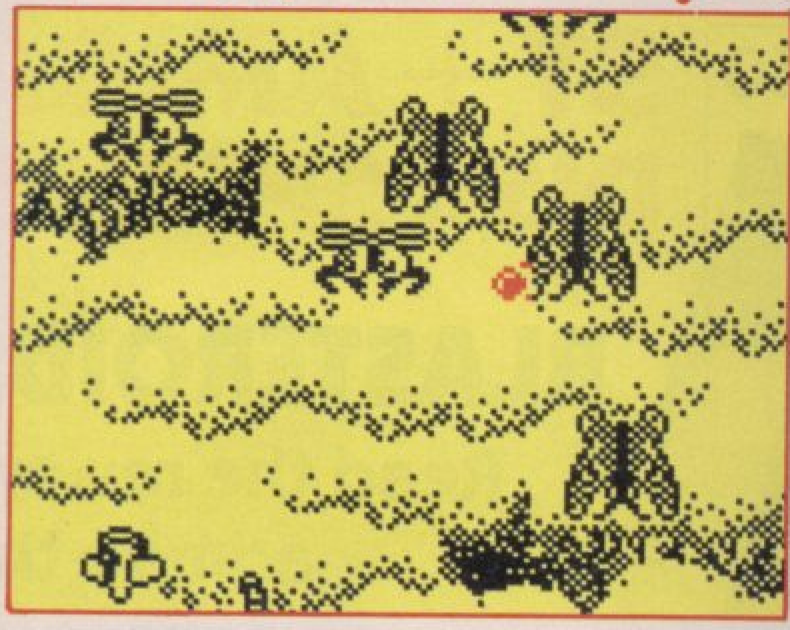
The icons, from left to right are: Walk left. I wonder what this one does. Move up. Lets your character move up in a lift if you are standing inside one. Move down. See move up. Walk right. Makes your character breakdance. (Really? – GT) Stop all movement. Makes your character transform into a green Volvo estate and then propose to the first alien he meets and promise undying love and (DILLON, THIS IS GETTING STUPID, STOP IT AT ONCE – AS) Move through door. Makes you character move through door if he's standing outside one. Jump. Makes him jump. Fire. Makes him shoot currently activated weapon. Roll. Makes him do a forward roll **if he's moving at the time you activate the icon.** The final icon lets you pick up anything collectable.

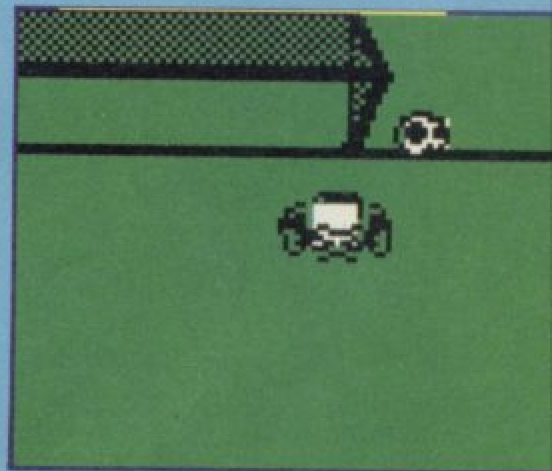
A generous assortment of nasties line the glinting steel corridors of the ship. These range from harmless little drills











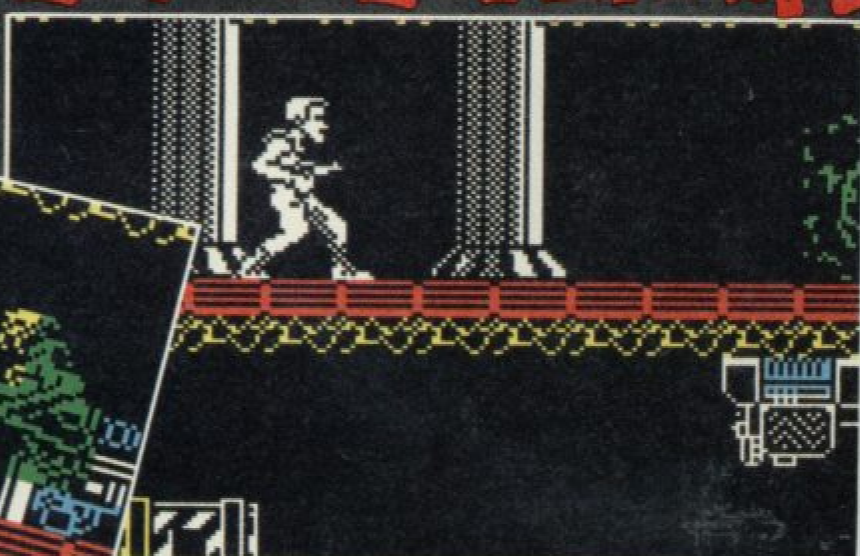
HOTSHOT

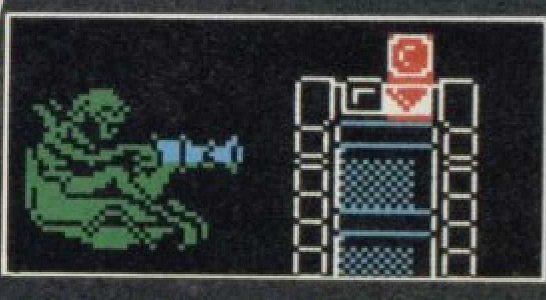
Latest, but probably not last, in a long line of officially endorsed Gazza Lineker games, Hotshot **is an overhead, eight way scrolling complete soccer game with lots of different moves and things. Full one and two player options exist, obviously, and it features a nice striped pitch and some full colour players! Woooh!**

Whether it stands up to the up and coming Microprose Soccer **or the very soon to be appearing** Emlyn Hughes Soccer **remains to be seen. We hold our breath.**

Streetdate: March.
Price: £8.95







that race along the floor and have to be jumped over, to large froglike things in battle armour that hover and fire at you. Roof mounted cannons line some of the ceilings and, boy, are they nasty.

Fighting back is fun. The angle you fire your gun back at is determined by the length of time you hold down the fire button, ranging from parallel to the ground through to the perpendicular. The more powerful the weapon you carry, the less shots it takes to blow away the nasties, which you need to take care of because the shots are very limited.

Graphics are pretty fab. Colour has been used really well. No, that's not colour clash, that's the green glow given off by your laser generated forcefield. Oh all right, it is colour clash. All the sprites are really nicely detailed and animated. In fact, the animation is better than the original Amiga version. That's one in the eye for 16-bit.

The sound is all right, but nothing really special. Just spot effects really. The 128K spot effects are nicer than the 48K spot effects, however.

I like **Obliterator** more than I liked **Barbarian**. Another first rate 16 to 8-bit conversion by Ver House, and I look forward to seeing many more■

ARCADE ★ REVIEW

FAX BOX

OBLITERATOR *Label:* ***Melbourne House*** *Author:* ***Icon Design*** *Price:* ***£8.95*** *Memory:* ***48K/128K*** *Joystick:* ***Various***

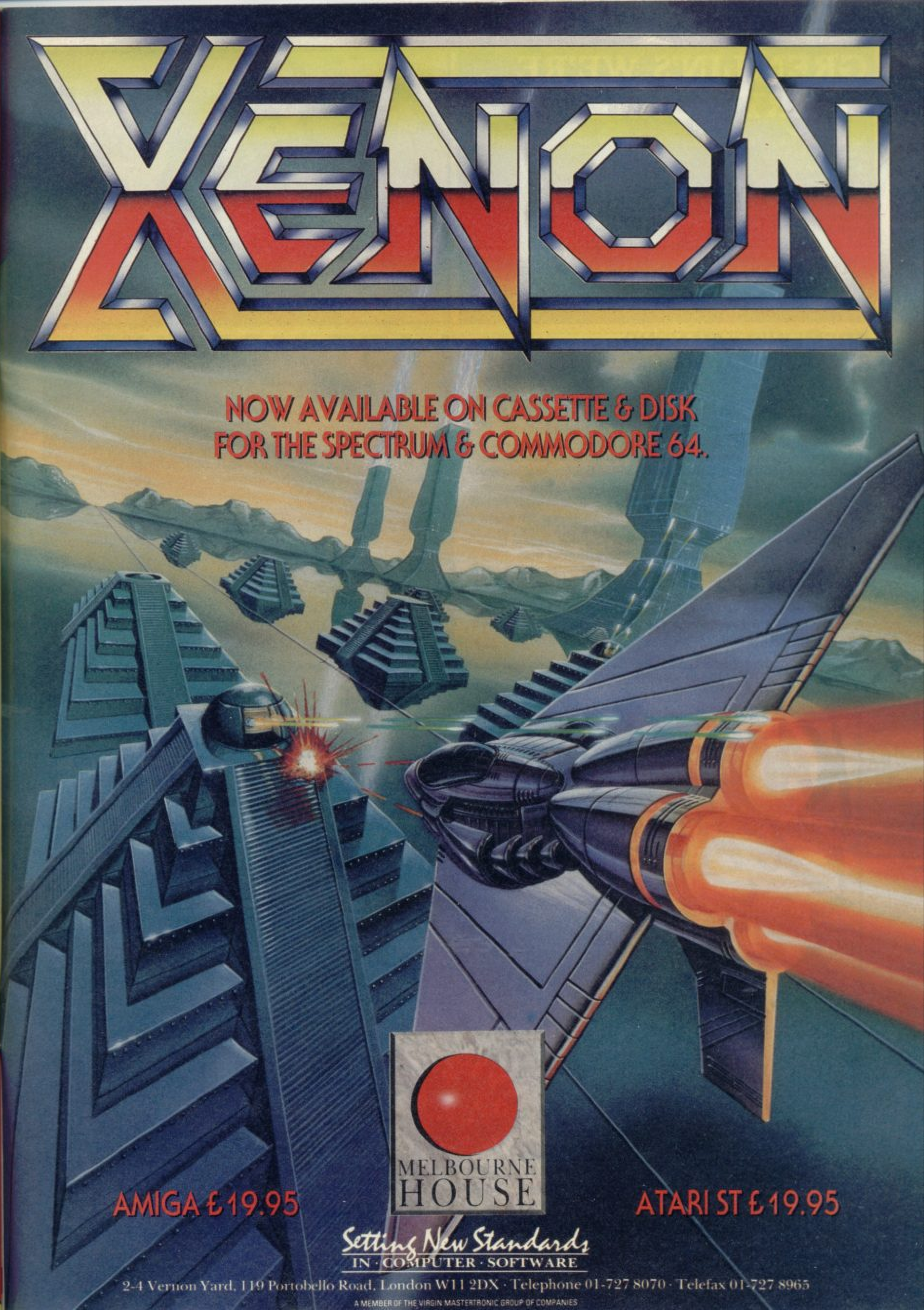
GRAPHICS	SOUND
83	70
70	82
PLAYABILITY	LAST ABILITY

8-bit conv of 16-bit arcade adventure. It's ok as it goes.

Reviewer:

OVERALL **79**

10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90


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GREMLIN'S WE'RE SORRY CORNER #1

Attention all **Write Stuff** people who had their **Write Stuffs** printed in the January or February issue!
Listen, how can we put this:
All the entries were eaten by a goat that wandered into the office.
We were kidnapped by Aliens who insisted that we handed the names over under pain of death.
All the winning offerings were eaten by Jim.
OK then:
We lost them and we're sorry and it wasn't our fault but we do want to pay you and we're very sorry again.
IF YOUR WRITE STUFF WAS PRINTED IN THE JANUARY OR FEBRUARY ISSUE AND YOU HAVE NOT YET RECEIVED PAYMENT PLEASE RING 01-251 6222 EX 2409 IMMEDIATELY!

GREMLIN'S "AMAZING PLAYABILITY!" CORNER

Oh dear! What a confusing world we live in! Wherever you turn people insist that their products are simply miles better than anyone else's. Who do you believe? What do those enticing phrases actually mean? In the last of the series, Gremlin explains what those quotes really mean. Special thanks to Codemasters team for their assistance in making up these ludicrous and purely hypothetical examples.
"Absolutely massive!" – Plan view characters graphic Gauntlet rip off.
"Absolutely brilliant! – Fine, though with no unique features.
"Brilliantly realistic!" – Probably indicates that the realism is misplaced, like there is a faithful digitised version of the scoreboard.
"A real challenge!" – Impossible.
"Incredibly playable! – Hopeless graphics.
"Fast smooth action!" – Hopeless graphics moving quickly.
"Amazing playability!" – Even worse graphics.
"Fast furious and incredibly addictive!" – You can't get off the first screen.



LAST MONTH'S COMPETITION

Marvellous! We had lots and lots of actually rather amusing offerings for the competition this month. We were shocked! It seems the girlie and the man in the funny suit brought out the best (or worst) in you. So from a big batch of offerings we picked out from Ryan Redman "Haven't you taken this safe sex thing too far?" – (are we allowed to say 'sex' in this magazine? – GT) also well liked was this from Andrew Burley "Cor blimey you've got a nice helmet." (No we won't explain this joke to anybody who doesn't understand it.) However an on-points winner (mainly because it caught more of the flavour of the picture than any of the others) was this from K Tyler of Hull "I don't care mother I love him and I want his baby." Congratulations Mr Tyler – twenty pounds will be coming your way ever so soon(ish)



GREMLIN'S WE'RE VERY SORRY CORNER #2

Would the following people all of whom were runners-up in the **Dr Joyce Stick** competition please get in touch with their full address: C Cooper of Plymouth, Robert Baines of Sheffield, Shirley Warren of Atherton, Shirley Moore of Hailsham, Peter Jowitt of Sheffield and Jon Halewood of Southport.

Gremlin



GREMLIN CAPTION COMPETITION No 27

Yum! Here's a picture of Sigourney Weaver from Aliens. Here are your caption considerations for this month: What is she thinking or saying? What is the man doing? Why doesn't she wash? The caption that most amusingly answers these or any other questions you like, will win a gigantic cheque for a mighty 20 pounds.
Closing date is March 1st.

Name ....
Address ....
....
My hilarious captions ....
....



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